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# THE CELTIC CHURCH

## IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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BY

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# PREFACE

THE following translation, originally suggested by Mr. Whitley Stokes, was undertaken with the permission of the editors of the *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, in the tenth volume of which periodical the article first appeared, and with the approval of the author, who was, however, unfortunately prevented by a serious illness from seeing the proof-sheets as they passed through the press. But I was fortunate in obtaining the kind assistance of other scholars. The work of translation was carried out under the constant supervision of Mr. Stokes himself, Professor Oliver Elton, Mr. Alfred Nutt, and of my brother, Professor Kuno Meyer. To them I am indebted for many valuable suggestions and criticisms of which I eagerly availed myself; but for any shortcomings that may still be found I am alone responsible.

A. MEYER.

NEW BRIGHTON,
10*th August* 1902.

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I.

### The Origin and Early History of the Celtic Church.

*A.* In Britain.


PAGE

§ 1. Earliest Traditions . . . . . 1
§ 2. The Church of the Fourth Century . . . . . 4
§ 3. Fifth Century . . . . . 6


*B.* In Ireland.


§ 4. Earliest Records of the Church in Ireland . . . 7
§ 5. Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Patrick Legend . 9
§ 6. Monastic Character of the Irish Church . . . . 13
§ 7. Early Intercourse with the South-west of Britain, and its Consequences . . . . . 16
§ 8. Pelagius, and his Influence on Ireland . . . . 19
§ 9. Linguistic Facts, and their Bearing on the Patrick Legend . . . . . 24
§ 10. Patrick's Writings: The *Confession* and the *Epistle* . 27
§ 11. The Historical Patrick . . . . . 29
§ 12. Prosper's Statement . . . . . 32
§ 13. Identity of Prosper's Palladius with the Historical Patrick . . . . . 35
§ 14. Account of the Early History of the Irish Church, based on Historical Facts . . . . . 41
§ 15. Life of Sucat-Patrick . . . . . 43


*C.* In North Britain (Alba).


§ 16. Early Records of North Britain . . . . . 53

## CHAPTER II.

### Second Period—A.D. 500–800.

#### *A.* The British Church.

PAGE
§ 17. Revival of the British Church in Wales . . . . 56
§ 18. Characteristics of the British Church in Wales . . 58
§ 19. Points of Difference between the British Church and the Roman Church . . . . . 60

#### *B.* The Irish Church in Ireland and North Britain.

§ 20. Flourishing State of the Irish Church in the Sixth Century . . . . . 63
§ 21. Superiority of the Irish Church . . . . . 66
§ 22. Historical Aspect of the Irish Church . . . . 69
§ 23. North Britain Christianised by Irish Monks . . . 73
§ 24. Extension of the Church into Northumberland . . 75
§ 25. The Paschal Dispute between Rome and the Irish Church . . . . . 76
§ 26. The Appearance of the Patrick Legend and its Object . . . . . 79
§ 27. Defeat of the Irish Church in Britain . . . . 83

## CHAPTER III.

### Third Period—A.D. 800–1200.

#### *A.* In Wales.

§ 28. The Church in Wales . . . . . 87

#### *B.* In Ireland.

§ 29. The Irish Church of the Ninth Century . . . . 89
§ 30. Irish Monks on the Continent . . . . . 91
§ 31. Decay of the Irish Monasteries . . . . . 92

PAGE

§ 32. Confusion of the Viking Period with the Patrician Era in the Sources . . . . . 95
§ 33. The Culdees . . . . . 98
§ 34. The Increasing Influence of Rome over the Church of Ireland . . . . . 102

*C.* In North Britain.

§ 35. The Celtic Church of North Britain . . . . . 105

Conclusion.

§ 36. Additional Remarks on the Institutions of the Celtic Church during her Prime . . . . . 107
§ 37. The Paschal Date . . . . . 110
§ 38. Consecration by a Single Bishop . . . . . 111
§ 39. Superiority of the Rank of Abbot to that of Bishop . 112
§ 40. Difference in the Spirit of Christianity as practised by Celtic and Roman Priests . . . . . 115
Cult of Relics, a Roman Custom, not known in the Older Celtic Church . . . . . 119
Impersonation of the Celtic Spirit of Christianity in Aidan . . . . . 129

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# INTRODUCTION

THE term Celtic Church denotes that branch of the Christian Church which existed in parts of Great Britain and in Ireland before the arrival of Gregory's missionary, S. Augustine, in A.D. 597, and which, for some time after, maintained an independent existence by the side of the newly created Anglo-Roman Church. **Extent and duration of the Celtic Church.**

In dealing with the subject, it is well to distinguish between the British branch—*i.e.* the Celtic Church in Roman Britain, which found a continuation in Wales —and the Irish branch in Ireland and in Alba (the Scotland of to-day).

The History of the Celtic Church may be divided into three periods :— **Division into Different Periods.**

1. The origin and early history of the Church up to the threshold of the sixth century.
2. Her further development and golden age until her formal annexation by the Roman Church, *i.e.* from the beginning of the sixth century until into the eighth century.
3. The gradual disappearance of her individuality, from the ninth to the twelfth century.

# CHAPTER I

## FIRST PERIOD

## THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE CELTIC CHURCH

### *A.* IN BRITAIN

Earliest traditions. The Lucius fable.

§ 1. It may safely be concluded from the silence of Gildas that the British Church of the first half of the sixth century possessed no knowledge or tradition respecting the introduction of Christianity into Britain. An apostle to the Saxons had arisen in Augustine of Canterbury (A.D. 597), and the feud between the Celtic Church of Britain and the newly founded Anglo-Roman Church had lasted for a century before we meet with the Lucius fable in Bede. To quote his own words: "In the year of our Lord's incarnation 156, Marcus Antoninus Verus, the fourteenth from Augustus, was made emperor together with his brother Aurelius Commodus. In their time, whilst Eleutherus, a holy man, presided over the Roman Church, Lucius, king of the Britons, sent a letter to him, entreating that by his command he might be made a Christian. He soon obtained his pious request, and the Britons preserved the faith which they had received, uncorrupted and entire, in

peace and tranquillity until the time of the Emperor Diocletian." [1]

**Object of the Lucius fable.**

This legend is repeated in the later *Historia Brittonum*, and grows in length and detail during the following centuries. That it cannot lay claim to any authenticity has been generally admitted. It is highly probable that it was invented towards the end of the seventh century by a representative of Rome, in order to support him in his claims against the Britons.[2]

Contemporary foreign writers, as well as native sources, give us no answer to the questions whence, how, and when Christianity was first brought to Britain. Warren in his *Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* attributes the introduction of Christianity into Britain chiefly to Greek churches at Lyons and Vienne, and as a consequence of the persecutions under Marcus Aurelius, but his arguments cannot be called convincing.[3] In view of the total absence of any tradition of definite missionary activity, we must needs conclude that Christianity was brought to Britain by natural intercourse with other countries, Gaul and the Lower Rhine in the first place, rather than by any special individual or missionary effort. Tertullian and Origen state that

**The Church of the third century.**

[1] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. 4. Anno ab incarnatione Domini C^mo^ L^mo^ N^to^ Marcus Antoninus Verus XIIII. ab Augusto regnum cum Aurelio Commodo fratre suscepit: quorum temporibus cum Eleuther vir sanctus pontificatui Romanae ecclesiae praeesset, misit ad eum Lucius Britanniarum rex epistolam, obsecrans ut per eius mandatum Christianus efficeretur; et mox effectum piae postulationis consecutus est; susceptamque fidem Brittani usque in tempora Diocletiani principis inviolatam integramque quietâ in pace servabant.

[2] See Mommsen in *Chronica Minora*, iii. 115.

[3] Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, pp. 46–60.

Christianity had already spread in Britain to some extent during the earlier part of the third century, but the rhetorical tenor of these passages[1] forbids our treating them as safe testimonies. Thus much, however, we may safely assume, that Christianity made great progress in Britain in the course of the third century. We learn from Gildas that the persecution under Diocletian produced martyrs in Britain, three of whom he names.[2] But weighty reasons speak aganst any noteworthy extension of that persecution into Britain, and Gildas' statement, based on a sixth-century tradition of the British Church, cannot be regarded as historical evidence. Certain proof of the existence of Christianity in Britain in the early fourth century is afforded by the presence of three British bishops, one presbyter, and one deacon at the Council of Arles (A.D. 316).[3] The names of the towns whence came these representatives of British Christianity (York, Lincoln, London), as well as those of the martyrs mentioned by Gildas (St. Albans, Caerleon-on-Usk) show distinctly that Christianity first took a firm footing in the towns and stations of the Roman high-roads.

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, i. 3. Tertullian: (*c.* A.D. 208) Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita, . . . in quibus omnibus locis Christi nomen qui jam venit regnat. Origenes: Quando enim terra Britanniae ante adventum Christi in Unius Dei consensit religionem? (A.D. 239).

[2] *Chronica Minora*, iii. 31. Sanctum Albanum Verolamiensem, Aaron et Julium Legionum Urbis cives ceterosque utriusque sexus diversis in locis summa magnanimitate in acie Christi perstantes dico.

[3] Haddan and Stubbs, i. 7. Nomina episcoporum cum clericis suis, quinam et ex quibus provinciis ad Arelatensem Synodum convenerunt: Eborius Episcopus de civitate Eboracensi provincia Britannia. Restitutus Episcopus de civitate Londinensi provincia suprascripta. Adelfius Episcopus de civitate Colonia Londinensium (leg. Legionensium?). Exinde Sacerdos presbyter; Arminius diaconus.

**The Church of the fourth century. Arianism.**

§ 2. Sufficient records exist[1] to show that throughout the fourth century there was a well-organised Christian Church in Britain, which stood in constant touch with the Church on the Continent, especially with the Gallican Church, and regarded itself as an active member of that body. Among the 400 and more Western bishops who assembled at Ariminum (A.D. 359), a considerable portion must have been British, for Sulpicius Severus mentions expressly that, to maintain their independence, all the British bishops, like those of Gaul, refused to accept the material support offered them by Constantius, with the exception of three only, who accepted it *inopiâ proprii*. The very fact of their taking part in the Council of Ariminum proves that the British, as a member of the Roman Church, was drawn into its doctrinal disputes. Thus Gildas firmly maintains[2] that Arianism greatly injured the British Church, a statement invalidated, it is true, in the eyes of most by the testimonies of Hilary of Poitiers (about A.D. 358) and Athanasius (A.D. 363).

Mr. F. C. Conybeare[3] has recently adduced some important arguments to show that the British-Welsh Church, even as late as the seventh century, tolerated, if not actual Arianism, yet views far from orthodox regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. We may add that the Irish Church also, following in the wake of her mother, the British Church, does not lack traces (besides those mentioned by Conybeare) of heterodox views on the Trinity during the sixth and seventh

[1] See Haddan and Stubbs, i. 7–12. [2] *Chronica Minora*, iii. 32.
[3] *Transactions of the Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1897–98, pp. 84–117.

centuries. In the Life of Gildas, written at Rhuis in Brittany, in which monastery Gildas died in 570, and where they must have had traditions of his work in Ireland during the years 565 and 566, we are struck, in the midst of a highly coloured description of his activity in Ireland, by the special mention of his having instructed the whole clergy in the Catholic Faith *to cherish the Holy Trinity*.[1] It is also remarkable that Muirchu maccu Machtheni, author of a Life of St. Patrick, in the second half of the seventh century, lays great stress on the fact that Patrick embarked for Ireland "in the name of the Holy Trinity," and that he christened "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."[2]

Most remarkable of all, perhaps, is the tradition of a much later time, that Gregory the Great suspected Columba of Hi, who died in 597, of not having thought quite correctly with regard to the Holy Trinity,[3] because of his hymn *Altus Prosator Vetustus*.

It must therefore be admitted that Arian views found their way into the British Church during the second half of the fourth century. And as in A.D. 384 theworldly power of Rome was on the wane, and the political situation during the two subsequent centuries prevented a strict and complete organisation of the Church, it is conceivable that these views should have lived on, and tradition may possibly still have

[1] *Chronica Minora*, iii. 95: clerum universum in fide catholicâ ut Sanctam Trinitatem colerent instruxit.

[2] See Whitley Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 273, 276.

[3] See Bernard and Atkinson, *The Irish Liber Hymnorum*, i. 64; ii. 25.

preserved them as late as the year 600, as Conybeare assumes, in the baptismal formula.

**Fifth century. Pelagianism and its extirpation by Germanus.**

§ 3. It is certain that *Pelagianism* appeared in the British Church during the fifth century. Contemporary witness to this fact is borne by Prosper, who writes as follows in his Chronicle under the year 429: "The Pelagian Agricola, son of the Pelagian bishop Severianus, corrupts the churches of Britain by the teaching of his dogma. But at the instigation of the deacon Palladius, Pope Celestine sends Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, in his stead, who overthrows the heretics, and makes the Britons return to the Catholic faith."[1]

Further details about Germanus in Britain are given in the *Vita Germani*, written towards the end of the fifth century, and used by Bede.[2] From this source[3] we learn that, at the request of a British embassy, Germanus was sent out with Lupus by a Gallican synod, and shortly afterwards went on a second mission, which is said to have led to a complete extirpation of Pelagianism in the British Church. At any rate Gildas, writing a century later, does not mention Pelagianism.

**Decline of the Celtic Church in Britain, on the coming of the barbarians.**

For a whole century after the mission of Germanus nothing is heard of the Celtic Church in Britain. As early as A.D. 360 Roman Britain had been attacked by the Picts from the north and by the Scots from Ireland; and the installation, towards the end of the

[1] *Chronica Minora*, i. 472. Agricola Pelagianus Severiani episcopi Pelagiani filius ecclesias Britanniae dogmatis sui insinuatione corrumpit. Sed ad actionem Palladii diaconi papa Caelestinus Germanum Autisidorensem episcopum vice suâ mittit et deturbatis hereticis Britannos ad catholicam fidem dirigit.

[2] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 17–21.

[3] Haddan and Stubbs, i. 16 *seq.*

fourth century, of a *comes litoris Saxonici* in the south and south-east, shows that there were attacks from a third quarter as well. In A.D. 383 the bulk of the legions stationed in Britain accompanied the usurper Maximus to Gaul and Northern Italy. During the first two decades of the fifth century Rome lost its hold upon Britain more and more. Native Britons who regarded themselves as Romans, such as a certain Constantinus, tried to maintain Christian-Roman civilisation against the inroads of barbarism, but in vain. During the fifth century the complete transformation of the political conditions of the island by its Anglo-Saxon conquerors went on incessantly. Christianity disappeared from the East, where it had had its oldest strongholds, such as York, Lincoln, and London. Together with those Britons who kept their independence, it found a refuge in the mountainous districts of the West, where, in the course of the sixth century, it gradually comes to the front again.

## *B.* THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO IRELAND

§ 4. We possess a native tradition concerning the coming of Christianity into Ireland. Its two oldest sources can hardly be dated earlier than the last quarter of the seventh century. They are :—

**Earliest records of the Church in Ireland : Patrick's Life by Muirchu maccu Machtheni.**

1. The Life of Patrick, written by Muirchu maccu Machtheni at the desire of Bishop Aed of Slebte (Sletty), who died in A.D. 698.

**Notes by Tirechan.**

2. *Notes* by a certain Tirechan, a pupil of Ultan of Ardbreccan, who died in A.D. 656. They were com-

piled from what he had once heard about Patrick from his master's own lips, and from the material found in his papers. Both records are to be found in the Book of Armagh, the different parts of which were written between A.D. 807 and 846, but their original form has in both cases undergone changes, details having been added in the intervening period.

**The Patrick legend.**

Stripped of all details, the native tradition on the introduction of Christianity into Ireland may briefly be stated as follows: Until A.D. 431 Ireland had been entirely heathen. In that year a certain Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine to convert the Irish, but he returned at once, and died in Britain on his way. He was immediately replaced by the Briton Patricius, who in his youth had been a prisoner in Ireland. In the course of a highly successful missionary activity Patricius converted the whole of Ireland to Christianity. He founded churches all over the country, ordained bishops and presbyters, and died as the universally revered head of this Church, in which he held, so to speak, the rank of a metropolitan, having his see at Armagh in Ulster.

The two records differ as to whence Patrick came to Ireland in 432. According to the Life of Patrick, he came from Auxerre, where, intending to proceed to Rome, he had been staying with Germanus. According to Ultan, however, he was really on his return journey from Italy through Southern Gaul. But these differences may be put altogether on one side in considering whether this tradition of the intro-

duction of Christianity into Ireland can lay any claim to authenticity, appearing, as it did, *more than two hundred years after Patrick's death.* Every one of the following arguments tells against it.

**Inquiry into the authenticity of the Patrick legend.**

§ 5. If Patrick actually accomplished, between the years 432 and 459—or even 493, as was assumed later on—all that tradition ascribes to him in the seventh century, then he was a personality comparable in eminence with Martin of Tours, or, better still, with Columba of Hi, the apostle of the Picts. Like great generals, such great missionaries leave behind them a circle of grateful admirers and younger associates, among whose number there is generally one to keep alive for posterity a faithful image of the hero. Sulpicius Severus did this for Martin of Tours; Cummene for Columba of Hi; Jonas for Columban of Luxeuil; and Willibald for Boniface. And in the following generation the fame of the masters grew and spread, as, for instance, Columba's did, thanks to Adamnan and to the disciples from Hi who worked in Northumberland. Finnian of Clonard, the teacher of Columba of Hi and Comgall of Bangor, who died in 548, must have known many contemporaries of Patrick in his youth, just as Adamnan, dying in 704, knew some of the younger associates of Columba of Hi. Columban of Luxeuil, as well as Columba of Hi, were almost as close in time to Patrick as were Colman and his associates to Columba of Hi at the time of the conference at Whitby in A.D. 664.

How, then, are we to explain the circumstance that

until the beginning of the second third of the seventh century even the name of Patrick appears nowhere, and that when he is first mentioned, in the epistle of Cummian to Segene of Hi, it is only in connection with the introduction of the Dionysian (!) paschal computation, which is ascribed to him? Is it not remarkable that at the conference of Whitby, though historical arguments were the chief weapons in the dispute, and though the Irish referred to the traditions of their forefathers and to Columba,[1] yet Patrick's name was never once mentioned? Would not these men, coming from the north of Ireland, have referred to him if they had known him as the founder of the Irish Church, and consequently as the author of their paschal computation?

And now for Bede. He knows nothing about the origin of Christianity in Ireland, excepting the report of Prosper—which we shall deal with later on—according to which *the Irish had already turned Christians in* A.D. 431.[2] This silence about Patrick as apostle of Ireland in Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the Angles is all the more striking because in his *Martyrology*, compiled from other sources before he wrote the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, he has the following note at the 17th of March: *In Scotia S. Patricii confessoris.* Familiar as we are with Bede's character and his intimate knowledge of the state of the Church in the North of Ireland, his profound silence on Patrick's activity as apostle of the Irish cannot be explained by

[1] See Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 25.
[2] Ibid., i. 13.

the conjecture[1] that he held the apostle Patrick to be identical with the first bishop of the *christianised Irish* in A.D. 431, mentioned by Prosper. Bede's evidently keen interest in the early beginnings of Christianity in the British Isles—which makes him relate the legend of Lucius, and give an account of Nynia's activity in Southern Pictland, and of Columba's work among the Northern Picts—this self-same interest would certainly have made him turn the meagre note from Prosper into something more life-like drawn from Irish tradition, had such been known to him. Thus he did not hesitate to give in full the Irish tradition of the origin of Pictish matriarchy, which is in the opening chapter of his Ecclesiastical History.[2]

"The Picts arriving in Ireland by sea, desired to have a place granted them in which they might settle. The Scots answered that the island could not contain them both; but: We can give you good advice, said they, what to do; we know there is another island, not far from ours, to the eastward, which we often see at a distance when the days are clear. If you will go thither, you will obtain settlements; or if they should oppose you, you shall have our assistance. The Picts accordingly, sailing over into Britain, began to inhabit the northern parts thereof, for the Britons were possessed of the southern. Now the Picts had no wives, and asked them of the Scots, who would not consent to grant them upon any other

[1] See Loofs, *Antiquae Britonum Scotorumque Ecclesiae quales fuerunt mores*, p. 51.

[2] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 1.

terms than that when any difficulty should arise they should choose a king from the *female* royal race rather than from the male: which custom, as is well known, has been observed among the Picts to this day."

Therefore, it is impossible that in the north of Ireland there existed an early seventh-century tradition of a founder of the Irish Church called Patrick. *And yet it is in the north*, at Armagh, *that Patrick is said to have had his see, and to have ended his days.* But the first reports in this matter reach us from the south of Ireland, since the home of Muirchu maccu Machtheni, the author of the oldest Life of Patrick, is near Wicklow, and his teacher, Aed, lived in the monastery of Sletty (whose site was in Queen's County, near Carlow).[1] There the paschal computation of the Roman Church had been introduced about 634, and thence the first intimation of Patrick's having introduced the Dionysian (!) Easter-cycle reached the North.

How account for this topsy-turvydom, if we assume that the seventh-century tradition of Patrick gives a faithful picture of what actually happened in the fifth century, even though in outline only? Consider Muirchu's complaint of the vagueness of information about Patrick,[2] and the lack of colour and facts in his description of Patrick's activity in Ireland, which, modelled as it is on famous patterns,[3] is a mere conventional abstract scheme of the lifework of an Irish apostle. Consider again Tirechan's witness that

[1] See O'Donovan, *Annals of Ireland*, i. 300, note *e*.

[2] See Whitley Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 269.

[3] See Schöll, *De Ecclesiasticae Britonum Scotorumque Historiae Fontibus*, p. 66, and G. T. Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 75 *seq.*, 94 *seq.*

Patrick's grave was not known in the seventh century.[1] In a later addition, it is true, we are informed that Columba, moved by the Holy Ghost, pointed out the grave of Patrick and fixed its locality in Sabul (Saul),[2] but Adamnan, writing about 688, knows nothing of this, although he devotes a whole book to the Prophetic Revelations, and another to the Angelic Visions of his hero.

In contradiction to the statement of Tirechan, the author of an Appendix to the *Life* of Muirchu states that Patrick's grave was at Dún Lethg laiss. This appendix must have been written before 730. It occupies the second place in the Book of Armagh. If Patrick had been such an important factor for fifth-century Ireland, and especially for the North, as Columba was for North Britain from 563 till 597—and this is what the seventh-century tradition of the conversion of Ireland alleges—then all these points mentioned above are perfectly inexplicable.

**Monastic character of the Irish Church.**

§ 6. As incomprehensible as the oblivion which swept away all memory of the founder of the Irish Church during the first century of her existence, is the idea that within an inconceivably short lapse of time that Church could have been fundamentally reorganised. For when in the sixth century the mist clears, we do indeed find a flourishing Irish Church, but one whose system differs wholly from any that Patrick could have founded, and from that which his legend presupposes.

[1] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 332. [2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., ii. 298.

Were that legend correct, we should expect an *episcopal church*, dependent on Patrick's see of Armagh, just as the Church of North Britain, founded by Columba, depended on Hi from the year 563 until other influences from outside came into play. But as a matter of fact, the Irish Church of Columba (born in 520), and of Finnian of Clonard (died in 548), *i.e.* from the end of the fifth century, is a *monastic church with no organised centre*, with no traces of such a past as the Patrick legend presupposes. Remembering how intensely the Irish cling to the customs of their fathers—a characteristic trait apparent in Columban of Bobbio, in the Irish at the Whitby conference, and wherever Irishmen are found—considering that the complete transformation of this monastic church of the sixth and seventh centuries into an episcopal church was not effected for more than four centuries even after the theoretic acceptance of an episcopal constitution, is it likely, nay, is it possible that within a generation Patrick's supposed work should have suffered so radical a change? It would be highly improbable, even if important political changes had taken place, but of these there is no indication whatever. Should we not cease to postulate a fifth-century Irish Episcopal Church, and rather conclude that the legend of the conversion of Ireland by Patrick during the first half of the fifth century—appearing as it did only in the second half of the seventh century—cannot be said to reflect historical facts? The Catalogue of Irish Saints[1] is constantly quoted in support of the

[1] See Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 292.

legend. In it we are told that "the first order of saints was in the time of Patrick; and then they were all bishops, famous and holy, full of the Holy Ghost, 350 in number, founders of churches. They had one Head, Christ, and one chief, Patrick. They observed one mass, one celebration, one tonsure from ear to ear. They celebrated one Easter on the fourteenth moon after the vernal equinox, and whoever was excommunicated by one church, all excommunicated. They rejected not the services and society of women, because founded on the Rock Christ they feared not the blast of temptation. This order of saints lasted during four reigns, *i.e.* during the time of Loegaire, of Ailill Molt, of Lugaid, son of Loegaire, and of Tuathal. All these bishops were sprung from the Romans, Franks, Britons, and Irish." But this passage only shows how an Irishman of the eighth century took the Patrick legend for history, and regardless of historical truth and possibilities, arranged matters so as to bring down the Patrician period in the Irish Church almost to the last days of Finnian of Clonard and the foundation of the monastery of Derry by Columba (*i.e.* down to the year A.D. 543).

Nor should the last words of the preface in Muirchu maccu Machtheni's Life of Patrick (*dictante Aiduo Slebtiensis civitatis episcopo*) [1] be adduced as evidence of the existence of other than monastic bishops.[2] There was no *town* of Slebte in Ireland. The Irish monasteries were large settlements of many small buildings, the whole surrounded by wall and

[1] See Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. p. 271.

[2] See Loofs, p. 61.

rampart. *Civitas* (Ir. *cathair*) is a current term in Ireland for a monastery, both in the Annals[1] and in the Lives of Saints.[2] In the above passage, Aed is merely denoted as the *monastic bishop* of Slebte, and all the annals which record his death[3] add "anchorite of Slebte." *The very nature and development of the sixth-century Irish Church are an emphatic protest against the legend which grew up in the following century concerning the introduction of Christianity into Ireland.*

**Early intercourse with the south-west of Britain, and its consequences.**

§ 7. Is it possible to substitute for this unhistoric legend a hypothesis which shall better satisfy the known conditions of the problem? Let us remember that in clear weather Ireland can be seen from numerous points on the west coast of Britain, not only in the north from the Rinns of Galloway and Cantire, whence Agricola saw it,[4] but also from the hills of North Wales and St. David's in South Wales, where indeed the view suggested a plan of invasion to William Rufus.[5]

In earlier times, intercourse between Britons in the south-west and Irish in South Ireland must have been easier and safer than intercourse with such of their own fellow-countrymen as lived inland at an equal distance. It must, at least, have been as lively as that between the North Gallic and South British coasts in Cæsar's time. We find it faithfully reflected

[1] *Cf.* "Pascha in Eo civitate commotatur" in Tigernach's *Annals*, in 716, and "Pasca commutatur in Eo civitate" in the *Annals of Ulster*, A.D. 715.

[2] See Reeves, *Life of Columba*, p. 357, note *a*.

[3] *Annals of Ulster*, A.D. 699; *Chronicon Scotorum*, A.D. 696; *Annals of Ireland*, A.D. 698.

[4] Tacitus, *Agricola*, 24.

[5] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerarium Cambriae*, ii. 1.

in the Irish and Welsh Lives of the sixth and seventh century saints, but we have also numerous Irish and British testimonies that it had flourished as vigorously for centuries before; nay, we know that Irish settlements, dating back to the third and fourth centuries, existed in the south-west of Britain, especially along the Severn estuary. They survived until the fifth and sixth centuries, when they were absorbed in the British population, which was then reinforced from the north area of the island.[1]

**Records of Christianity in Ireland before the Patrician era.**

When we consider the close relations between the south-west of Britain and the south-east of Ireland, as well as the fact that during the whole of the fourth century there existed an organised Christian Church in Britain, is it possible to assume that Ireland remained pagan until A.D. 432 ?

The very period which accepted the Patrick legend in theory yields Irish records of pre-Patrician Christianity in Ireland, especially in the south. There exist a number of saints' Lives, chiefly those of Declan,[2] Ailbe,[3] Ibar,[4] Kieran,[5] and Abban,[6] in all of which Patricius expressly bears the title of *Archiepiscopus Hiberniae*, which fixes the date of their redaction. But these same men are Patrick's contemporaries, older than he, working independently of him, and the

[1] See Zimmer, *Nennius Vindicatus*, pp. 85–93, and Kuno Meyer, *Transactions of the Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1895–96, p. 55 *seq.*

[2] *Acta Sanctorum*, mens. Julii, tom. 5, 590–608.

[3] Ibid., mens. Sept. 4, 26–31.

[4] Ibid., mens. April 3, 173 *seq.*

[5] Ibid., Mart. 1, 389 *seq.*

[6] Ibid., Oct. 12, 270 *seq.*; *cf.* also Usher, *Antiquitates* (1587), p. 408 *seq.*

recognised apostles of their respective districts. Some of them stand in friendly relationship with each other, and the definite areas of their activity are on the south-east coast in the three counties of Waterford, Wexford, and Wicklow, as well as in the inland counties of Tipperary and Kilkenny, where numerous local testimonies to their cult still survive. These counties comprise the district whence, thanks to the intercourse with the south-west of Britain, the first diffusion of Christianity in Ireland must naturally have taken place. The numerous contradictions in the Saints' Lives, with regard to the spread of Christianity in Ireland through Patrick, are the natural result of attempting to varnish facts derived from genuine local tradition with the views universally accepted at the time when the Lives were compiled.

Noteworthy, too, are the following points: In Muirchu maccu Machtheni's Life, Patrick lands in the neighbourhood of the present Wicklow, whence, without accomplishing anything,[1] he at once departs for the north and remains there, never again setting foot in the south (Munster, Leinster). Tirechan also essays a full description of Patrick's activity in the north[2] (Connaught, Ulster, Meath), while only *one* sentence reports that he came to Munster as well.[3] We cannot account for this fact by supposing that these men knew less about Patrick's activity in the south; on the contrary, both Muirchu maccu Machtheni

[1] See Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 275.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 303–330.
[3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 331.

and his master Aed were southerners, and one would sooner assume that they knew less about the north. Nor can we explain the almost absolute silence of the two oldest records concerning Patrick's activity in the south by the undoubted fact that the Patrick legend was forced upon the north by the south from the time of Cummian's letter to Segene, with the intent of winning over the reluctant Northern Irish to conformity with the Roman Church. We must needs recognise that whilst the Romanising Southern Irish were ready in theory to acknowledge a Patrician apostolate, which, starting from Armagh, had influenced the less known north, hoping thereby to win over the mainstay of the opposing party, the Abbot and Bishop of Armagh, yet the well-known traditions about their founders, preserved by the southern monasteries in the seventh century, were an effectual bar to describing Patrick as the apostle to the Gentiles in the south.

§ 8. A further important testimony to the existence of Christianity before Patrick's alleged mission (432–459) deserves to be quoted. One of the most striking facts in the history of the Irish Church, is the great regard in which the heresiarch Pelagius, and especially his commentary, were held. We see from Pope John's letter to the Northern Irish, partly preserved by Bede,[1] that besides the incorrect observance of Easter, they were chiefly reproached with Pelagianism. This was in A.D. 640. The following facts throw a remarkable light on the whole matter. The collection of

**Pelagius, and his influence on Ireland.**

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 19.

Irish canons, which dates in all probability from the beginning of the eighth century, and is conversant with the Patrick legend, quotes from Pelagius, as it does from Jerome or Augustine, with the self-same formula : *Pelagius ait,*[1] *Hieronymus ait, Augustinus ait.* In the New Testament comprised in that portion in the Book of Armagh written in 807,[2] the Epistles are introduced in fo. 106 v with the words, " Here begins the prologue of Pelagius to the Epistles" ; further, on fo. 107 r, " Here begins the prologue of Pelagius to the Epistle to the Romans." And, later on,[3] short abstracts of the single Epistles are given, with special mention of Pelagius. Now, the *mutilated* commentary of Pelagius, handed down to us in Jerome's works, ignores these abstracts entirely.[4]

Again, the famous Würzburg manuscript of St. Paul's Epistles, dating from the eighth or ninth century,[5] and so important to the student of Old Irish, furnishes an interlinear commentary, partly in Irish, partly in Latin, the chief source of which is the original *unmutilated* commentary of Pelagius. His name is quoted more than nine hundred times, while in the mutilated commentary fully one hundred of these passages have been excised, though some of them are known to us elsewhere through quotations in polemical writings. Moreover, we possess the *Collectaneum in Epistolas Pauli* of an Irishman, Sedulius Scottus,[6]

[1] See Wasserschleben, *Irische Kanonensammlung*, 27, 13 ; 42, 4.
[2] *Book of Armagh*, fo. 25–190.
[3] *Loc. cit.*, fo. 108 v, 128 r, 130 v, 132 r, 134 v, &c.
[4] Migne, *P. L.*, 30, 646 *seq.* [5] *Codex Würziburgensis*, M. th. f. 12.
[6] See Traube, *O Roma Nobilis*, pp. 42–50.

whose sphere of activity was in Liège, Cologne, and Metz, between 848 and 858; he hardly ever quotes his sources, but on examining his commentary[1] closely, we find that the original unmutilated commentary of Pelagius, whom he once mentions by name,[2] was his chief authority, as is proved by identity with the readings of the Würzburg MS. Lastly, between the 23rd of March and the 17th of May 1079, an Irishman of the name of Marianus Scottus made at Ratisbon a copy of St. Paul's Epistles, with a commentary from an older manuscript. This copy is now at Vienna.[3] We find on folio 3 v, with the heading "Here begins an argument written by Pelagius on all the Epistles," the very same text as is headed in the Book of Armagh, folio 160 v, *prologus Pilagii in omnes epistolas.* For the text of the Epistles, Pelagius is quoted about two hundred times, and here again some of the passages missing in the mutilated commentary may be found in the Würzburg MS., or in Sedulius.

It is evident that the Irish Church, during the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, possessed the original *unmutilated* commentary of Pelagius (which had disappeared everywhere else in the West), and knew that Pelagius was the author. It would be wrong to accuse the Irish Church of Pelagianism on this account; the very commentary, for instance, of the Würzburg MS. quotes the view of Pelagius on

[1] Migne, 103, 9–270.

[2] Aliter secundum Pil[agium]: Migne, 103, 19.

[3] *Codex* 1247, *Biblioth. Pal. Vindob.*, formerly *Cod. MSS. Theol.*, cclxxxvii.

Romans v. 15, only to dispute it. To cite a phrase used by Gennadius with regard to another work of Pelagius, his Pauline commentary was "a book necessary to students"; and, in that spirit of tolerance towards dissenting views characteristic of the Celtic Church, she continued to use the commentary long after Pelagianism was a thing of the past.

**Nationality of Pelagius.**

There may have been other factors as well. Pelagius is usually spoken of as a *Britto* or *Britannus* by birth, but his chief adversary, Jerome, in two places expressly describes him as Irish,[1] and the above mentioned facts lend support to this view. A sincere and earnest thinker, Pelagius did not adopt heretical views until he came to Rome, about the year A.D. 400. But if he did come from a Christian monastery in the south-east of Ireland, he would, as a matter of course, take care that his works reached home, in the same way as towards the end of the same century the semi-Pelagian, Faustus Britto, who lived in Southern Gaul, sent his writings to his native land by his fellow-countryman, Riocatus.[2]

Natural partiality for their learned fellow-countryman would unconsciously influence the Irish, even in later times. It could not but enhance the renown of the Irish monasteries of the end of the fourth century that they should have produced a champion capable of defending himself in Greek at the Synod of Jeru-

[1] *Scottorum pultibus praegravatus* (Migne, 24, 682), *progenies Scotticae gentis de Britannorum viciniâ*, ibid., 758.

[2] See *Monumenta Germanica*, tom. viii. 157.

salem in A.D. 415, whereas his opponent, Orosius, according to his own testimony,[1] had no mastery of the language, and needed an interpreter. It would show us how far back we could date the study of Greek in those Irish monasteries, which, four hundred years after the death of Pelagius, produced a Johannes Scottus Eriugena, whose fate on the continent was similar to that of Pelagius. Even if the great esteem in which Pelagius was still held in Ireland during the seventh and eighth centuries cannot be regarded as decisive confirmation of Jerome's assertion of his Irish nationality, yet the facts quoted above are at least incompatible with the official Patrick legend (*i.e.* that Ireland was still heathen in A.D. 431, and that Patrick christianised it and organised the Church).

For we know that Honorius and Zosimus annihilated Pelagianism within the border of the Roman state and see, in the year 418 ; that in 429 Germanus, commissioned by Celestine, extirpated it in South Britain. If the Patrick legend reflected actual history, if Ireland were really heathen prior to his advent, we could only explain the authority enjoyed by Pelagius' commentary in Ireland by assuming that Patrick, the friend of Germanus of Auxerre, was himself Pelagian, an assumption which is, of course, absurd. But if we admit that the south of Ireland was already Christian in the first quarter of the fifth century, it is comprehensible that Pelagianism, which we know to have existed in the south-west of Britain in A.D. 429, should

[1] *Liber Apologeticus*, 6, 7.

also have found its way to South Ireland, whether Pelagius was Irish or not.

**Linguistic facts, and their bearing on the Patrick legend.**

§ 9. While the above discussion has shown us that the fundamental basis of the Patrick legend is wrong, and that Ireland, especially that part of Ireland which stood in close contact with the south-west of Britain, must have been to a large extent Christian about 430, linguistic facts prove that Christianity must have come to Ireland from Britain. British and Irish are both dialects of Celtic. The following differences of sound may be distinguished in the fourth century :—

1. Old Celtic long *ā* is preserved in Irish, but has developed a different pronunciation in British, changing through *å* to *ō*, so that Old Irish *lān*, *lār*, *mār* are represented by *lōn*, *lōr*, *mōr* in Old British.

2. The labiovelar guttural (Latin *qu*) has in Old Irish become a single guttural (*k*), written *c*, but in British without exception *p*, so that Old Irish *cenn*, *crann*, *mac* equal *penn*, *prenn*, *map* in Old British.

3. For the combination *sr*, which is preserved in Irish, we find *fr* in British, so that Old Irish *sruth*, *srōn* correspond to *frut*, *froen* in Old British.

On examining the ecclesiastical loanwords, and those bearing on general civilisation, introduced from Latin into Irish at the time of the Christianisation of Ireland, we find that their Irish form is not such as we should expect if they had been borrowed straight from Latin, but that they have undergone changes which can only be explained by the above-quoted differences between the British and Irish tongues.

Thus we have in Old Irish :—

1. *Trindōit* (trinitātem); *umaldōit* (humilitātem); *cartōit* (caritātem); *castōit* (castitātem); *altōir* (altāre); *caindlōir* (candelārius); *notlaic* (nātālicia); *popa* (pāpa).

2. *Casc* (pascha); *caille*, "a nun's veil" (pallium); *caillech*, "nun"; *clūm* (plūma); *corcur* (porpura); *cuthe* (puteus); *crubthir* (prebiter, from "presbyter").

3. *Srian* (frēnum); *srogell*, *sraigell* (flagellum); *sroiglim* (flagello); *slechtan*, "genuflexion" (flectionem); *slechtim* (flecto); *sornn* (furnus); *sinister* (fenestra); *sūist* (fustis).

As Irish possesses the sounds *ā* and *p* in numerous cases, as well as *f* and the combinations *fr*, *fl*, there is no obvious reason why, in case of a *direct* borrowing of the above words from Latin, Irish should have changed these sounds into *ō*, *c*, *s*, *sr*, *sl*. But the phenomenon is easily explained if we assume that these words were *interpreted to the Irish by British mouths*.[1]

These Britons would naturally pronounce Latin *ā* like *ō*. But they did more than that: trying to speak to the Irish in their own language, and observing the difference of *c : p* (*cenn : penn*) and *sr : fr* (*sruth : frut*) in numerous words common to both Irish and British, they transferred this difference also to the loanwords from Latin, and, so to speak, *hibernicised* their British form by saying *casc* instead of *pasc*, just as Irish *cenn* stood in place of British *penn*.

In the words quoted, therefore, and in others of the same category, we have the oldest layer of loanwords, introduced into Irish together with Christianity

[1] See Güterbock, *Lateinische Lehnwörter im Irischen*, 1882, p. 91 *seq*.

and Christian civilisation; while later on, the Irish, after turning Christians and becoming familiar with the Latin language, borrowed further words direct from Latin *without* the above changes.

What is the bearing of these linguistic facts upon the Patrick legend? Patrick himself was a Briton; but his associates were, according to the old *Vita*, Gauls of Romance origin;[1] while, according to Tirechan, they were partly of Frankish and partly of Romance origin.[2] The Catalogue of Saints tells us that the bishops of his time were "of Roman, Frankish, British, and Irish nationality."[3] This probably refers to the associates of Romance and Frankish origin whom Patrick brought with him. If we treat the legend as history, we dare not throw these statements overboard. But it is altogether incredible that the Latin loanwords in Old Irish should have been introduced by Patrick and his Romance-speaking companions from the continent after A.D. 432. On the other hand, their linguistic form is easily explained if Christianity was gradually spread throughout Ireland in the fourth century by Irish-speaking Britons.

Another linguistic fact, in support of the view that the afore-mentioned words came to Ireland through British interpreters before Patrick's supposed missionary activity, must be noted. Old British had changed its former long *ū* into *ǖ* or *ī* respectively before the emigration of the Britons to Armorica, *i.e.*

[1] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 273.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 305.
[3] See Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 292.

in the first half of the fifth century.[1] But Irish *clūm* (plūma), *sūst* (fūstis), prove that at the time the Britons still pronounced *ū*, and not *ǖ* or *ī*, in these words; otherwise the Irish forms would be *clīm*, *sīst*. Therefore it is highly probable that the oldest layer of Latin loanwords was introduced into Irish by Britons *before* the first half of the fifth century.

**Patrick's writings: the "Confession" and the "Epistle."**

§ 10. Two writings of the supposed apostle of Ireland have come down to us, the so-called *Confession* and the *Epistle* to the British king Coroticus.[2] Both are preserved side by side in four manuscripts of the eleventh century. The more important of the two documents, the *Confession*, appears also in the Book of Armagh, written between A.D. 807 and 846.

The four later manuscripts are independent of the older document, for in the latter a number of passages, which from their contents and style must have been part of the original, have been left out by the scribe, who thought he copied from Patrick's own manuscript, but found the writing illegible in parts.

Both documents are evidently the work of the same man, who calls himself *Patricius episcopus*. He makes certain statements concerning his descent, his youth and early experiences in life, until he thought himself called upon by visions to be the Bishop of Ireland, the same statements, undoubtedly, as underlie Muirchu maccu Machtheni's description of the youth of the legendary Patrick. The *Confession* must then have already existed during the second half of the seventh

[1] See Loth, *Les Mots Latins dans les Langues Britoniques*, 1892, p. 67.
[2] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 296–319; Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 357–80.

century. This being the case, alike on material and linguistic grounds the authenticity of the *Confession* and the *Epistle* is unimpeachable. It is manifestly impossible that in Ireland or anywhere else, where people believed in Patrick's missionary work as the legend depicted it, writings of the above description could have been foisted on the apostle of Ireland between the end of the seventh and the beginning of the ninth century. Now what do these documents prove? Every one who reads them without bias must assent to Schöll's opinion:[1] "If the Patrick, whom posterity has extolled to such an extent, really wrote the *Confession*, he was unlearned and altogether most rustic." The concluding words of the *Confession*: "This is my confession before I die," show that it was written by a man looking back upon a long life, and complaining bitterly of ingratitude, trying to defend himself against the reproach of having presumptuously embraced a calling far above his capabilities, and threatening to turn his back upon Ireland, because he recognises the failure of his life's work there. True, in the *Epistle* he calls himself the "appointed bishop of Ireland," but he adds: "although now I am despised by some men;" and in the *Confession* he repeats: "I am despised of most men." Now, in this tract which he wrote late in life, for the double purpose of defending himself as well as accusing his adversaries, not the slightest mention is made of his having consecrated even a single bishop, or having established a church in Ireland.

[1] *De Eccl. Britonum Scotorumque hist. font.*, p. 71.

**The historical Patrick. Import of the "Confession."**

§ 11. One fact is patent: *the Patrick of history cannot have played during the fifth century that part which the seventh-century legend ascribes to him.* His own *Confession* speaks against it.

His own writings furnish us with yet another reason for denying that the *historical* Patrick was the founder of the Irish Church. The offspring of a well-to-do family, he grew up, according to his own confession, in an easy-going worldly Christianity, until in his sixteenth year he was kidnapped by plundering Irishmen, and for six years had to tend pigs and sheep as a slave in the north of Ireland. This brought about an inward conversion, it is true, but, on the other hand, his surroundings during those six years (from sixteen till twenty-two), which are generally the most important in life for the increase of knowledge, can hardly have furthered his intellectual training. On his return he was haunted by dreams and visions proclaiming him to be the apostle of Ireland. He can scarcely have made good the defects of his youthful education by later serious studies, but must have entered the years of manhood with a very inadequate amount of instruction. He himself admits this in his *Confession*, for he not only calls himself again and again "rustic and unlearned" (*rusticus*), but also says with regard to his culture: "I strive to attain in my old age what in youth I did not acquire."[1] And he owns: "A long time I have had it in my mind to write, but up till now I hesitated, for I feared lest I should fall under censure of men's tongues; because I have not read as

[1] "Adpeto in senectute meâ quod in juventute non comparavi."

others have, who, excellently versed in civic law and sacred letters in a like degree, have never since their childhood changed their speech, but rather made it more perfect by use. Whereas this speech and utterance of mine is here transformed into another tongue; and by the savour of the style I use, it is easy to be judged how I have been taught and trained in diction."[1] He was scoffed and scorned in Ireland because of his neglected education.[2] Rhetoricians (*rhetorici*) he calls his scornful opponents, comforting himself with the belief that God chose him, the stupid one, from the midst of those who were esteemed wise and conversant with the laws and masters of speech as of everything else.[3] The opponents to whom he here alludes cannot have been any of Patrick's converts, nor can they have been pagans, for Patrick makes no allusion to paganism in his complaints. Even people, he admits, who bore him no ill-will opposed his endeavours to be ordained bishop of Ireland, on the ground of his want of culture.

To this he bears witness himself in the following words: "Many opposed my mission, not because of malice, but my wish did not commend itself to

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 298, 18 *seq.*: Ollim cogitavi scribere, sed et usque nunc hesitavi; timui enim ne incederem in linguam hominum, quia non didici sicut et ceteri qui optime itaque jure et sacras literas utroque pari modo combiberunt, et sermones illorum ex infantiâ nunquam motarunt, sed magis ad perfectum semper addiderunt. Nam sermo et loquela mea translata est in linguam alienam, sicut facile potest probari ex salivâ scripturae mea, qualiter sum ego in sermonibus instructus et eruditus.

[2] Ibid., ii. 309, 20: Rideat autem et insultet qui voluerit.

[3] Ibid., ii. 299, 26 *seq.*

them by reason, I confess, of my defect in learning."[1] And this want of culture, to which Patrick himself owns, is, moreover, plainly revealed in his two works. "The language and style of this book is so illiterate and corrupt, that it seems to have been written or turned into Latin by a person little versed in the Latin language," says Schöll of the *Confession*.[2] And true it is, the Latin language has hardly ever been treated worse than by this whilom swineherd, who thought himself the chosen bishop of Ireland, and who betrays his want of literary culture by constantly swerving from his subject, and by using biblical quotations in order to cover his incapacity to give clear expression to his thoughts.

Is this the Patrick that is supposed to have founded in the fifth century the Irish Church, *which from the sixth till the ninth century united in itself the learning and culture of both Christianity and classic antiquity, to an extent not to be found at that period anywhere else in the West?*

The widespread hypothesis that the Irish Church of the sixth century was based on a revival proceeding from outside sources, is, as we shall see later on when we come to consider her second period, a fable without the slightest foundation. On the contrary, the Irish Church of the sixth century is the natural expansion, uninfluenced from without, of the Church of the fifth century. A tree planted by the Patrick *of history* could never have borne such fruit as Finnian

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 310, 1 *seq.*: Multi hanc legationem prohibebant non causâ malitiae, sed non sapiebat illis, sicut et ego ipse testor, iter illud propter rusticitatem meam.

[2] *De Eccl. Britonum Scotorumque hist. font.*, p. 68.

of Clonard, Columba of Hi, Comgell of Bangor, Columban of Bobbio, Adamnan, Dicuil, Sedulius, Joannes Scottus Eriugena, &c. Thus the seventh-century legend that Christianity was brought to Ireland by Patrick during the fifth century is inconsistent with his own writings.

Prosper's statement.

§ 12. In addition to all this, we have the definite statement of Prosper Tiro, who writes in his *Chronicle* under the year A.D. 431, "Palladius, ordained by Pope Celestine, is sent as first bishop to the Irish believing in Christ."[1] Prosper went to Rome shortly after St. Augustine's death (August 28, 430), and brought a letter from Pope Celestine, who died July 27, 432,[2] to the Gallican bishops of Massilia. So he was in all probability in Rome during the year 431, when the above event took place. Prosper, who lived at Massilia, issued the first edition of his *Chronicle* in 433. In it we find the above statement, which, except a note on the condemnation of Nestorius at the synod of Ephesus, is the only information given for the year 431. Thus we have a record of a certainty and authenticity which cannot be surpassed, confirming the results arrived at in the preceding paragraphs, viz. that in 431 the Irish were already Christians, to the same extent, perhaps, that Gaul could be called Christian at the time of Martin of Tours.

If we bear in mind the organisation of the Irish Church in the sixth and seventh centuries, the mean-

[1] Prosper, *Chron.* in Migne, *Pat. Lat.* li., col. 595: Ad Scottos in Christum credentes ordinatus a papâ Cælestino Palladius primus episcopus mittitur.

[2] See Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, i. 231, note 7.

ing of Prosper's expression, "first bishop," is clear. Palladius was the first bishop ordained in accordance with canonical ritual, as distinguished from the missionary and monastic bishops of the Irish Church during the fifth century.

The value of Prosper's statement in the *Chronicle* cannot be shaken by an apparent contradiction in a somewhat later work of his. While Celestine's successor Xystus, who died in 440, was still alive, probably in the year 437, Prosper wrote against Cassian's *Collationes Patrum* his *Liber contra Collatorem*, containing a fulsome panegyric on Celestine, in which the following passage occurs: "With no less care did he free the British Isles from that same disease (*i.e.* Pelagianism), . . . and by ordaining a bishop for the Irish, whilst he endeavoured to keep the Roman island Catholic, he made also the barbarous island Christian" (*et ordinato Scottis episcopo dum Romanam insulam studet servare catholicam, fecit etiam barbaram Christianam*).[1] Can this rhetoric of the year 437 suffice to convict the sober chronicler of ignorance concerning what he wrote in 433 about the year 431? We may safely assume that Prosper knew nothing of Palladius' immediate return and death. This is important, in view of the use which the Patrick legend makes of Palladius' mission. "Palladius was ordained and sent to convert this island" (*ad hanc insulam convertendam*).[2] Thus are Prosper's words garbled. We may perhaps draw the inference that the statement of

[1] Migne, 51, 273, 18–274, 16.
[2] See Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 272.

437 is based upon hopeful first reports of Palladius, who had gone to Ireland in 431 as the first bishop. The word *Christianam* has chiefly been used to bring out the antithesis to *barbaram*, which again corresponds to the antithesis of *Romanam* and *catholicam*.

If such rhetorical flourishes are allowed any weight against indisputable historical fact, what strange inferences might we not draw from Juvenal's exclamation, uttered about the year 90 :—

*Arma quidem ultra*
*Litora Jubernae promovimus*,[1]

or :—

*De conducendo loquitur jam rhetore Thule*.[2]

Another reason for the authenticity of the bare record in the *Chronicle* as against the phrase in the panegyric, is the fact that it was not customary to consecrate "bishops" for countries where there were no Christians. An instructive example from the days of Gregory will serve as illustration. When Gregory had decided upon winning the Angles over to Christianity, "he sent the servant of God, Augustine, and with him several other monks who feared the Lord, to preach the word of God to the English nation. In case they were received by the English, Augustine had been appointed to be consecrated bishop."[3] Augustine settles with forty men on the coast of Kent ; they are not rejected, they preach, win over the king, erect churches, and restore the ruins of others dating from the time of the Romans. The king makes offerings to them.[4] "Then Augustine repairs

[1] *Saturnalia*, ii. 14.
[2] Ibid., xv. 112.
[3] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 23.
[4] Ibid., i. 25, 26.

to Arles and, pursuant to the orders received from the holy Father Gregory, is ordained archbishop of the English nation. After which, returning into Britain, he sends Laurentius the priest and Peter the monk to Rome to acquaint Pope Gregory that the nation of the English had received the faith of Christ, and that he himself was made their bishop."[1]

The supposition that Pope Celestine ordained a simple *Diaconus*—for such Palladius still was in 429—as bishop, to be sent out to a country considered entirely pagan, is in itself quite untenable ; Prosper's statement for the year 431, supported by the above-mentioned facts, remains unshaken, and the seventh-century legend falls to the ground.

**Identity of Prosper's Palladius with the historical Patrick.**

§ **13.** What fairly accurate account can be given of the introduction of Christianity into Ireland as the outcome of the foregoing argument ? How is the *historical* Patrick related to Prosper's Palladius, and what part did he play in the Irish Church of the fifth century ?

In the first place, it must be evident that the *historical* Patricius and Prosper's Palladius are one and the same person. Various reasons may be enumerated, namely :—

(*a*) According to the indisputable testimony of Prosper, Palladius went from Rome to Christian Ireland

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 27. Interea vir Domini Augustinus venit Arelas, et ab archiepiscopo eiusdem civitatis Aetherio, iuxta quod iussa sancti patris Gregorii acceperant, archiepiscopus genti Anglorum ordinatus est ; reversusque Britanniam misit continuo Romam Laurentium presbyterum et Petrum monachum, qui beato pontifici Gregorio gentem Anglorum fidem Christi suscepisse ac se episcopum factum esse referrent.

in 431 ; according to the universally established tradition of the Irish, Patricius came to Ireland in 432. It is incredible, in view of the scanty opportunities for travel in those times, that there should really have existed two different persons each charged with a definite mission to Ireland within so short a space of time.[1] Moreover, as already noted, Prosper, about the year 437, knows nothing of Palladius' failure. Todd's attempt[2] to meet this difficulty by conjecturing that Patricius did not come to Ireland till the year 440 is untenable, considering the material at our disposal. Is it probable that the date 432 should have been substituted for the *ex hypothesi* older and correct date, 440, so late as the eleventh century? Muirchu maccu Machtheni, in his Life, avoided the difficulties arising from the two years, 431 and 432, by the simple device of giving no dates at all. Attempts such as these to support the legend of two distinct contemporary missions effectually betray how baseless it is.

(*b*) Palladius goes to Ireland in 431 as "the *ordained* bishop of the Irish who believed in Christ," and Patricius, appearing a year later, calls himself emphatically "the *appointed* bishop for Ireland," although he complains, it is true, of want of recognition.

(*c*) We first find Palladius mentioned by Prosper under the year 429, in the previously quoted note: "The Pelagian Agricola, son of the Pelagian bishop Severianus, corrupts the churches of Britain by the teaching of his dogma. But at the instigation of the

[1] See Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 272.
[2] See his *Patrick*, pp. 392–99.

deacon Palladius, Pope Celestine sends Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, in his stead, who overthrows the heretics and makes the Britons return to the Catholic faith." Bearing in mind the inferior position of a *diaconus* in Rome, we can only understand the part ascribed to Palladius by a man conversant with the conditions of his time, on the supposition that Palladius himself was a Briton, who, on his way to Rome, had entered into friendly relations with Germanus of Auxerre. Now, according to his own testimony, the historical Patricius was a Briton, and had been in Gaul.[1] In the Life we are told that he stayed with Germanus, and Tirechan states that Patrick himself had said in his work, *In Commemoratione Laborum*, that he spent seven years on land and at sea in Gaul and Italy.[2]

**Patrick's other names.**

(*d*) If Palladius was British by descent, and had come to live in Rome, then in all probability his name was merely a Romanised translation of the original barbarian form. This was a general habit in those times with the British and Irish who left their native land, as we may conclude from such instances as Pelagius, Mansuetus, Faustus, Fastidius, Albeus, &c. And his British name is likely to have signified something like "warlike, bearing on warfare."

**Sucat.**

Now Muirchu begins the biography of the supposed apostle thus : "Patricius, who was also called Sochet, of British nationality, was born in the British Isles ;" and Tirechan states on the authority of his master

[1] See Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 309, 1–4.

[2] See Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 302, 19–23.

Ultan's manuscript, that *Succetus* was another name of Patrick. The Irish Fiacc's Hymn, of later origin, knows that Patrick when a child was called Succat; and in the gloss on this passage there is the additional note that this name was "British," and meant *deus belli vel fortis belli*, because *su* in British was *fortis*, and *cat* = *bellum*.[1]

This is fairly accurate: Sucatus,[2] from its meaning, corresponds to Greek εὐπόλεμος, composed of *su* = εὐ, and *catus* = πόλεμος, and, with the regular phonetic changes, appears as a common adjective in modern Welsh, viz. *hygad*, "ready for battle, warlike."

**Palladius.** Thus Palladius is a Roman rendering of the British name *Sucatus*, as O'Brien[3] has already rightly observed, without, however, drawing profit from his observation, believing as he did in the authenticity of the legend. Sucat either changed his name himself on his journey to Italy, or, what is more in accord with his scanty education, he made friends select for him a Roman equivalent for the British *Sucat*. When, in 431, Sucat-Palladius had left Rome as "the ordained bishop of the Irish who believed in Christ," it was only natural that on setting foot on the "barbarian island" he should drop the Roman translation of his name and call himself Sucat again, the more so as it is also the correct Irish form in the first half of the fifth century. So it happened that the name Palladius did not appear in Ireland till Prosper's work

[1] See Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 412.

[2] *Cf. Riocatus*, the British fellow-countryman of Faustus, *Mon. Germ. Auct. Antiq.*, viii. 157.

[3] *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 1887, pp. 723–31.

became known, and it is easy to see how the idea of two different persons sprang up.

But whence did Sucat get the name of Patricius, by which he calls himself in his *Confession* and *Epistle?* **Patricius.**

It will strike every attentive reader of these writings that besides his deep inward piety Patrick had also a good dose of that arrogance peculiar to enthusiastic religious persons of little culture. He was especially proud of his alleged aristocratic descent, which, however, was not so distinguished as he would make us believe. "I was born noble, my father being a *Decurio;* but I have exchanged that privilege of birth (I blush not for it, and I grudge it not) for the benefit of others,"[1] he wrote in his *Epistle to Coroticus;* and in the *Confession* he says: "that I should give myself and my noble birth up for the benefit of others."[2]

In Rome at that time the title of *Patricius* was often conferred upon high officials of the empire in token of high personal rank. The somewhat narrow-minded Sucat (Palladius) applying Roman conditions to the small British country town of Bannaventa, where his father had been senator or mayor, considered himself justified in assuming the title of *Patricius*, and thus figured in Ireland as *Succat Patricius* and in his writings simply as *Patricius*.

If we assume that this name had really entered into the Irish vernacular of the fifth century, then, **Cothrige.**

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 316, 15 *seq.* Ingenuus sum secundum carnem, nam decurione patre nascor, vendidi autem nobilitatem meam, non erubesco neque poenitet, pro utilitate aliorum.

[2] Ibid., ii. 306, 26. Ut darem me et ingenuitatem meam pro utilitate aliorum.

according to what has been said before about the transformation of Latin names into Irish through the medium of British, it could only appear as *Cathrige* or *Cothrige* in the Irish of the seventh century. And this is the form we actually find in a number of sources.[1] Tirechan quotes the place-names *Petra Coithrigi* in County Meath,[2] and *Petra Coithrigi* in Cashel in Munster[3] in connection with the legendary Patrick, without, however, being aware of the fact that he had come across the popular Irish name of the historic Patricius, which had been in use for two centuries. The meaning of the word Cothrige is altogether obscure to the Irish of the seventh and eighth centuries, as their wonderful etymologies show. They had lost all cognisance of the fact that Cothrige was the regular fifth-century form for Patricius, and therefore they looked upon Cothrige as an additional name of the legendary Patricius.

After the appearance of the Patrick legend in the seventh century, the literary form of Patricius underwent a fresh change in popular Irish. During the eighth century it became Patric, and we find the doublets *Cothraige* and *Patraic* in Fiacc's Hymn of the tenth century, just as "teuflisch" and "diabolisch" are to be found side by side in German, "chevalier" and "cavalier," or "coutume" and "costume" in French, "minster" and "monastery" in English. They are

[1] Tirechan, Fiacc, and others, who knew Patrick's other name Sucat, also know that he bore the name of Cothrige (*Cothirthiagus* in its Latinised form).

[2] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 310. [3] Ibid., ii. 331.

both Irish forms of the same name, but Hibernicised at different periods. Cothrige is the fifth-century name for the historical Patricius; Patric first appears in the eighth century as the popular name for Patricius, who had been resuscitated in the seventh century and turned into the legendary apostle of Ireland.

**Account of the early history of the Irish Church, based on historical facts.**

§ **14.** We may now sketch the following picture of the origin and early history of the Celtic Church in Ireland. From Britain, which possessed an organised Christian Church by the beginning of the fourth century, Christianity was brought to Ireland in the course of that century. It was the natural outcome of the close intercourse between the south-west of Britain and the south-east of Ireland. The actual founding of a Christian Church, spreading over larger parts of Ireland, must have been a result of that first powerful wave of monasticism which swept over Gaul and Britain from the middle of the fourth century, and brought in its course a number of half-Romanised Christian Britons as missionaries to Ireland. Two facts confirm this theory:—

1. The high repute which Martin of Tours enjoyed in Ireland, and which still showed itself in the ninth century, when it was thought desirable to connect the new apostle Patrick closely with him, nay, even to make him his nephew.

2. The difference between the organisation of the Irish Church and that of the very Church she sprang from, viz. the British Church.

If, as seems probable, the missionary-monastic system was powerful enough to bring about changes

in the régime of the strongly organised Episcopal Church of Martin of Tours in the north-west of Gaul—changes tending to bring it nearer to that of the Irish Monastic Church [1]—it may easily be understood how in Ireland, where no form of centralised government or municipal organisation existed, the heads of the missionary-monastic establishments (belonging as they generally did to the chief families of the clan), were able, despite their lack of Episcopal orders, to maintain in their own hands the entire system of church government.

Just as, during the ninth century, the Viking-plague drove many of the Irish to the Continent, so in the fifth century the Saxons must certainly have driven a number of Christian Britons to Ireland as well as to the Armorican coast in Gaul. How far the west and north of Ireland had become Christianised about A.D. 433 cannot be ascertained. It is deserving of notice that the historical Patrick in the two passages of his *Confession*, where he speaks with unrestrained frankness about his being led into slavery and of his six years' service (from 402 till 408) in the present county of Antrim,[2] never hints even with a single word at those Irish being heathens. This is the more remarkable, since the pirates—probably heathen Saxons—into whose hands he fell on his flight from Ireland to Britain, are expressly called *gentes* by him, and he dwells with horror on their paganism which made them think of offering him

[1] See Hartung, *Diplomatisch-historische Forschungen*, p. 34; and Loofs, *Antiquae Brit. Scotorumque Eccl.*, p. 67.

[2] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 296, 5 *seq.*; 300, 16 *seq.*

sacrificial (*immolaticum*) honey[1] to eat. It will be safe to say that the north-east coast of Ireland was also already Christian about the year 400. And the heretical doctrines of Arianism and Pelagianism also reached and affected these Christian parts of Ireland, as has been stated above.

**Life of Sucat-Patrick.**

§ **15.** A Briton named Sucat played an important rôle in the Irish Church during part of the fifth century. According to his own statement he was born in the British borough of Bannaventa, which must have been somewhere near the modern town of Daventry.[2] The year of his birth was in all probability A.D. 386, since, according to the *Confession*,[3] 30 + 15 = 45 years lay between his birth and his consecration as a bishop (A.D. 431). His family was possessed of some wealth, and had been Christian for generations, his great-grandfather having already been a Presbyter.[4] Although Christian, young Sucat gave himself up to worldly pleasures, and himself owns to having sinned against the sixth commandment when in his fifteenth year.[5] At the age of sixteen, *i.e.* A.D. 402, he was kidnapped by some plundering Irish, and taken as a slave to the north of Ireland. For six years, *i.e.* from 402 till 408, he was a swineherd. Reflection brought about contrition and conversion ; he practised austerities, he had visions, and heard supernatural voices counselling flight.[6] He succeeded in reaching

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 301, 16–303, 2.
[2] See *Academy*, May 11, 1895, p. 402 *seq.*
[3] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 304, 10–17.
[4] Ibid., ii. 296, 3.
[5] Ibid., ii. 304, 10 *seq.*
[6] Ibid., ii. 300, 17 *seq.*

the coast, where he fell in with heathens, presumably Saxons, who took him across to Britain in three days, and made him follow them about the country for sixty days, until at last he freed himself from this new yoke, and arrived at his old home (A.D. 408-9).[1] There he entered the Church and became a *diaconus*. He had visions: first a dream in the manner of the one related Acts xvi. 8–10; on another night Christ appeared to him, and on a third night the Holy Ghost,[2] so that he believed himself to be called upon to be the *Episcopus* for Ireland.

In his native place, where they were well acquainted with this eccentric and somewhat narrow-minded man of defective education, all kinds of obstacles presented themselves to his consecration as a bishop.[3] His own parents and friends were against it.[4] Then he tried to gain his point abroad. If we may believe Ultan's statements quoted by Tirechan, Sucat himself says in his work, *In Commemoratione Laborum*, that he had been wandering through Gaul and Italy for seven years.[5] He left home about the year 424, at the age of thirty-eight, and followed the ancient route to Rome, *viâ* Auxerre (where he made a stay with Germanus), along the valley of the Rhône, *viâ* Arles, and by the coast of the Provence and the Lerinian Islands through Northern Italy. In the meantime his barbaric name of Sucat had been duly Romanised into Palladius. He was in Rome in the year 429, accord-

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 300, 26–303, 2.
[2] Ibid., ii. 303, 5–304, 4.
[3] Ibid., ii. 304, 5 *seq.*, 310, 1 *seq.*
[4] Ibid., ii. 306, 18 *seq.*
[5] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 302, 19 *seq.*

ing to Prosper's statement. During his stay there he must have displayed great activity, as is the case with highly religious people possessed of a fixed idea. The influence he gained in Rome, in spite of his want of learning, must be ascribed to the circumstance that for twenty years back Britain had actually been severed from the empire, and consequently the connection between Rome and the British Church had become difficult. To judge from the great importance which he attaches in his *Confession* to his father's position of *decurio* in a small British country-place, he may possibly have exaggerated his family's influential position in Britain to the leading ecclesiastical circles of Rome. Prosper tells us that at Palladius' instigation Germanus of Auxerre was sent to the south-west of Britain in the year 429, in order to suppress Pelagianism there. And from the same source we learn that, in 431, Palladius obtained his heart's desire and was ordained *episcopus* for Ireland.

The consecration of the British *diaconus* Palladius, who had already spent six years in Ireland, was probably assisted in Rome by the idea that through him Pelagianism might be effectively dealt with in the south-east of Ireland, and that thus the danger of further contagion for the south-west of Britain, where Pelagianism had been extirpated during the years 429 and 430, would be removed. We may even interpret the above quoted passage in Prosper's *Liber contra Collatorem* to the same effect, if we interpret *Britannias* in Prosper's first clause as both Britain (*insulam Romanam*) and Ireland (*barbaram insulam*). On his

return from Rome, Palladius presumably visited Germanus, and came to Ireland in 432. He now put aside the Roman translation of his name, assuming in its stead the title of *Patricius*, due to his over-estimating the position of his family.

We have no detailed account of his activity in Ireland, but may possibly assume, from Prosper's words in the *Liber contra Collatorem*, that Sucat-Patricius believed at first in a successful result of his mission. And his successes may have referred to his work against Pelagianism. But he was never fully recognised as "the appointed bishop of Ireland." In his letter to Coroticus he says : "Although now I am despised of some," and in the *Confession* he calls himself "despised by most." His very limited literary education, which the ardour of conviction could not long conceal, became an object of scorn and derision among his more cultured antagonists. Cothrige—for thus the Irish had Hibernicised the title of Patricius—does not mention in the *Confession* that he had consecrated any bishops. How far his missionary efforts extended to Connaught and the north-west of Ireland, where there must still have been some scope for such work, can hardly be ascertained from the *Confession*, the only document of any weight in this matter. In interpreting the *language* of this document, we must remember the author's *way of thinking*. It is a monkish ascetic who writes of the worldly tendency of his youth : "I knew not the true God,"[1] or "I had not yet believed the living God even from my childhood, but remained in death and un-

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 296, 5. Deum verum ignorabam.

belief till I was sore chastised."[1] An attitude of mind, a mode of expression such as are disclosed in these phrases, make it impossible to infer with certainty paganism from the following words: "God it was in me, who conquered through me and withstood them all, that I might come to preach His gospel to the Hibernian people, and should suffer the contempt of unbelievers,"[2] especially if we remember the way in which Patrick refers to real paganism. Nor is the passage in the *Epistle to Coroticus*, concerning Patrick's "white-robed neophytes,"[3] a sure indication of paganism. Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, Augustine, all received baptism as adults, and it is not necessary to assume that the *neophyti in veste candidâ* were newly converted heathens. Patrick expresses the same views, and uses the same phrases as Salvian and others, to whom *convertere ad Deum* (*Dominum*) is identical with "to go into a monastery."[4] These points are deserving of notice, if we wish to ascertain from the *Confession* how far the historical Patrick "sent to the Irish believing in Christ as their first bishop," really performed any missionary work strictly so-called.

We have some indications of where the historical Patrick abode. In the *Life* of the legendary Patrick,

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 304, 14 *seq.* Deum unum non credebam ab infantiâ meâ, sed in morte et incredulitate mansi donec valde castigatus sum.

[2] Non mea gratia, sed Deus qui vincit in me: et restitit illis omnibus ut ego veneram ad Hibernas gentes evangelium praedicare et ab incredulis injurias perferre.

[3] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 314, 16.

[4] See *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, 1895, p. 148, note.

he is made to land at a harbour *ad hostium Dee*, *i.e.* in Irish, *Inber Dea*, near the Wicklow of to-day. Now the tendency of the legend required Patrick to settle in the North as soon as possible, and there would be no reason for Muirchu to make him land near Wicklow, unless an ancient trait of the historical Patrick was thus preserved.

Muirchu maccu Machtheni himself came from the district of the "Hui Garrchon, in the eastern part of the county of Wicklow, near the town of the same name,"[1] where his name is preserved in Kill-Murchon, near Wicklow, and where they still celebrate his memory on the 8th of June. He used as sources for his Life of St. Patrick both the *Confession* and the *Epistle* of the historical Sucat, called Patricius. Aed, the bishop of the monastery of Sletty, at whose instigation Muirchu wrote, also came from the south-east of Ireland (near the modern town of Carlow, on the left bank of the Barrow), and Cummian, who in his letter to the Abbot Segene of Hi, probably in 634, was the first to mention the legendary Patrick, was likewise a native of the south. The south of Ireland thus possessed material concerning the *historical* Patrick, *i.e.* the *Confession*, *Epistle*, and biographical notes. This makes it probable that Patrick settled somewhere in County Wicklow, whence he raised his claim to be regarded as the appointed bishop of Ireland, and where, after seeing the frustration of his hopes, he came to die, on the 17th of March 459, if we may

[1] See Reeves, *Adamnan's Life of Columba*, p. 51, note *c*; and Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae*, i. 445, notes 31, 32.

believe the statement in the Luxeuil Calendar, which is confirmed by the most trustworthy entries in the Annals. He would thus be seventy-three years old. However striking was the part he had played for two decades in the Christian Ireland of the fifth century, yet he failed to influence the Irish Church. He was soon forgotten everywhere, save in the district of his special activity, and here in the seventh century he was resuscitated, under the influence of a specific tendency, with the help of his own writings and of documents about him. There it was that he was created apostle to the Gentiles in Ireland, just as the Saxons had had St. Augustine of Canterbury, and the Picts in North Britain St. Columba of Hi.

It is hard, but not impossible, to say why Patricius does not mention in his *Confession* his consecration as bishop by Pope Celestine. Tirechan quotes from Ultan's book: "When in his seventeenth year, he was captured, led away and sold in Ireland; in his twenty-second year he was able to give up the hard labour. Another seven years he wandered about on land and at sea; over hill and dale through Gaul and Italy, and the islands of the Tyrrhene Sea, as he himself has related in his work, *In Commemoratione Laborum*."[1] This looks like an excerpt from the *Confession*. But in the existing manuscripts of the latter, we have only a vague reference to the stay in Gaul.[2] And even this reference is missing in the

[1] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 302.
[2] See Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 309, 3.

Book of Armagh text. But the scribe of the latter manuscript himself bears witness to the defectiveness of his copy by his repeated insertions of *et reliqua*, *et cetera*, and by references to the illegible hand of his original. And since the passages about Patrick's sojourn in Gaul, although missing in the Book of Armagh, appear distinctly genuine, and are, besides, supported by a passage in the *Epistle*,[1] there is no reason to doubt the fact of that sojourn. It is not impossible that the source of the *other* manuscripts also contained gaps, and that Patricius, who frequently returns to the same topic after digressions in the form of biblical quotations, may have talked more fully about his stay on the Continent in some other passage which is lost in our manuscripts, but was known to Ultan. But even then we know from Ultan that Patricius did not mention his being ordained by Celestine; on the contrary, he keeps us entirely in the dark as to who has conferred this benefit on him, although he dwells again and again on the difficulties which had to be overcome before his ordination. If Celestine really ordained him, we can understand his silence to some extent. It would perhaps be too much to say, that in 432, Ireland regarded the Roman Empire with the same hatred that filled the Britons against the Saxons in A.D. 600. But it is certain that at that time bitter feelings must have prevailed among the Irish against the Empire, which for more than 300 years had been a standing menace to their liberty, and had possibly made secret

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 317, 16.

as well as open attempts to achieve its purpose[1]—attempts not mentioned in the scanty records at our disposal.

If we remember that no agreement could be come to between Augustine of Canterbury and the British Church, partly because of Augustine's haughty and offensive bearing, but chiefly because the British bishops regarded him as the representative of the hateful Saxons, we can also understand that the Christian Irish about A.D. 432 would regard a legate from Rome with great suspicion. At that time they could hardly distinguish between spiritual and temporal Rome, and the interference in ecclesiastical matters of a legate sent by spiritual Rome must have appeared to them as the beginning of an interference in political matters on the part of temporal Rome.

If, therefore, Patricius on his arrival in Christian Ireland in 432 tried to impress the Irish with his ordination by Celestine, he must soon have found out his mistake. It is scarcely likely too that Celestine, who died in 432, ordained the eccentric Briton Palladius (Sucat) of his own free will, but rather yielded to his incessant appeals, and finally sent him off as "the first bishop to the Irish who believed in Christ."

Patricius himself, in unison with his religious feelings, would look upon Celestine as the mere visible instrument of *God*, who had appeared to him in person in his visions and dreams, to elect him apostle of Ireland. And it is only natural, that to the old man

[1] See Tacitus, *Agricola*, 24, conclusion.

on the brink of the grave, Celestine's slight and casual intervention in his life should fade away before the image of God Almighty, whose chosen one he was.

Finally, I should like to point out that the foregoing theory throws new light upon the *Dicta Patricii*[1] in the Book of Armagh. Their authenticity cannot be doubted, merely because doctrines contained in them do not fit in with Patrick's alleged creation, the Irish Church, as she appears in the seventh century and later. The truth is, the *Dicta* are not part of the fundamental ideas of the Irish Church, as was the general belief after the appearance of the Patrick legend, but are the views of a man who was bitterly censured and opposed in Ireland between 432 and 459.

The phrase attributed to Patrick: *Curie lession, Christe lession*[2] fits in well with the picture of a man who had a smattering of Latin, and certainly knew no Greek. Muirchu tells us that Patrick was wont to say *gratzacham* when a thing was given to him, as well as when it was taken from him.[3] This, too, is consonant with our view of the *historical* Patrick, who came from a bi-lingual district (Roman-British), and was sure to be familiar from early childhood with

[1] See Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 301. Timorem Dei habui ducem itineris mei per Gallias atque Italiam, etiam in insolis quae sunt in mari Terreno. De saeculo requissistis ad paradissum. Deo gratias. Aeclessia Scotorum immo Romanorum, ut Christiani, ita ut Romani sitis, ut decantetur vobiscum oportet omni horâ orationis vox illa laudabilis "Curie lession, Christe lession."

[2] Ibid. Omnis aeclessia quae sequitur me cantet: "Curie lession, Christe lession."

[3] Ibid., ii. 291. "Gratzacham in dato, gratzacham in ablato."

popular Low Latin, of which *gratzacham*, instead of *gratias agimus*, is an example. But whether the Irish *rhetorici*, who scoffed at Patrick's want of culture, themselves perhaps possessing the culture of a Pelagius, preserved these memories of illiterate Patrick in their admiration for the historical personage, remains at least doubtful.

### *C.* BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY IN NORTH BRITAIN

**Early records of North Britain. Nynia.**

§ **16.** Bede tells us[1] that about the year 400, a Briton named Nynia (Ninian) founded a monastery on the peninsula of Wigtown, which extends into the Irish Sea between the Firths of Solway and Clyde. Because of its stone church, it bore the name of *Ad Candidam Casam.* Nynia had received his theological training in Rome, and he greatly revered Martin of Tours, perhaps through having come into personal contact with him. From his newly-founded monastery Nynia spread Christianity among the *Picts* living *south* of the Grampians. That is the extent of our reliable information, since Nynia's biography was not written till the twelfth century.

**Patrick's Epistle to Coroticus.**

In the confusion which arose in North Britain towards the end of the first decade of the fifth century, the germs of the young faith were destroyed. But we have another confirmation from the first half of the fifth century, which has hitherto been left unnoticed. The historical Patrick sent a letter to a British king, called Coroticus, which has come down to us.[2] Muirchu

[1] *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 4.

[2] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 314 *seq.*

used it for his Life of St. Patrick, in a chapter entitled : *De Conflictu Sancti Patricii adversum Coirthech regem Aloo.*[1] As is quite apparent, this *rex Aloo* must have been identical with *King of Ail, i.e.* the place called *Alcluith* (=Rock on the Clyde) by Bede,[2] and Dumbarton in modern times.

Thus the Irish tradition of the seventh century made Patrick's Coroticus king of the Strathclyde Britons, between the walls of Antonine and Hadrian. Many facts confirm this. At the time of Columba of Hi (563–597), a king, *Roderc filius Tothail*,[3] reigned over the Strathclyde Britons in Petra Cloithe (=Ail-cluith); and the North Briton, whose work, written in A.D. 679, has come down to us in the *Historia Britonum*, also mentions a *Riderch Hen* as the contemporary of the Angle Hussa,[4] reigning between 571 and 579. The pedigree of this king "Riderch the Old," whose reign fell between A.D. 570 and 600, is preserved in the reliable Old Welsh Genealogies,[5] according to which he was a son of Tutagual, son of Clinoch, son of Dumngual, son of Cinuit, son of Ceretic Guletic. Thus five generations before Roderc (Riderch Hen) *c.* 515, *i.e.* about A.D. 420–450, we find a king, Ceretic =Coroticus, reigning over the Strathclyde Britons. By *guletic* ("ruler") the Welsh denote the usurper Maximus (383), and those British chiefs who considered themselves successors to the *Dux Britanni-*

[1] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 271, 498.
[2] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 12.
[3] See Adamnan's *Life of Columba*, i. 15.
[4] See *Chronica Minora*, iii. 206.
[5] Edited by E. G. B. Phillimore, *Y Cymmrodor*, 9, 173.

*arum* after the collapse of the Roman Empire in Britain.[1]

Thus it is clear that Patricius addressed his *Epistle*, written between 432 and 459, to this Coroticus who ruled over Dumbarton between the years 420 and 450, and considered himself successor to the *Dux Britanniarum*. According to this letter, the subjects of Coroticus are of British and Roman descent, as is but natural,[2] and his allies are *Scotti* and *Picti*, living to the north-west and the north-east of the Clyde respectively. With undisguised ire Patricius twice names the Picts *apostatae*.[3] Thus the *southern Picts*, probably under the influence of their northern kinsmen, who had remained heathen, had relapsed into paganism in the second third of the fifth century. It is noteworthy that the Irish (*Scotti*), dwelling to the north-west of the Strathclyde Britons, are not reproached with paganism. So we are justified in assuming that, like the subjects of Coroticus and their kinsmen on the opposite coast of Antrim, they were at that time Christians.

[1] See Rhys, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 103, 109, 134 *seq.*
[2] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 314, 11.
[3] Ibid., ii. 314, 13; 318, 5.

# CHAPTER II

## SECOND PERIOD (A.D. 500–800)

## THE CELTIC CHURCH FROM THE SIXTH TO THE NINTH CENTURY

### *A.* THE BRITISH CHURCH

Revival of the British Church in Wales.

§ **17.** It is in the second third of the sixth century that again we meet with the British Church. By that time the Angles and Saxons had driven the independent Britons into the mountainous districts of the west, and henceforth we can distinguish four separate groups of British nationality: Britons who had fled over sea into Armorica (the Bretons of to-day), Britons in the south-west of Britain to the south of the Severn estuary, Britons in Wales, and Britons in Cumberland and Strathclyde. But it is in Wales alone that we obtain a tolerably distinct picture of the Church. There the Britons offered the toughest resistance to their new Teuton neighbours encroaching on their independence. Much has been said of late about outside influences proving to be a source of new life for the Church in Wales. Professor Hugh Williams[1] has even tried to show that "British" Christianity of the sixth

[1] *Transactions of the Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1893-94, pp. 58 *seq.*

century had little or nothing to do with the Christian Church of Britain during the fourth century. According to him, the Christian Church of the fourth century comprised chiefly Roman residents in British towns, while the British population in the country remained heathen; and he asserts that soon after the withdrawal of the Romans and the collapse of the Christian Church of Britain there arose in its place, perhaps under the influence of Southern Gaul, the Celtic Church.

Such views can only be explained by an insufficient knowledge of the state of things in Britain before and after the "withdrawal" of the Romans, and by a wrong conception of the alleged desertion of Britain, as has already been justly remarked by Mr. F. Haverfield.[1]

Two decisive facts may still be added: first, the fugitive Britons whom fear of the Saxons drove from South Britain to the coast of Armorica were *Christians*, and yet spoke *British*, since their descendants have preserved that language to the present day; and secondly, the missionaries who came from Britain to Christianise Ireland in the fourth century also used British as their native idiom.[2]

Thus it is certain that about A.D. 400 a great majority of the British-speaking population were Christian. In the vicinity of the towns, part of the population was bi-lingual; those of less culture, like Patrick, spoke a Low Latin dialect as well as their native British, while Latin was the language of the

[1] See *English Historical Review*, 1896, p. 428 *seq.*

[2] See above p.24, § 9.

educated. In this connection it is noteworthy that even in the first half of the sixth century Gildas still calls Latin (by which he doubtless means the literary as distinguished from the popular form), "*nostra lingua*." [1]

Characteristics of the British Church in Wales. External organisation.

§ 18. Although the British Church of Gildas' time was a direct continuation of the Christian Church of Britain in the fourth century, its external organisation by no means represented an uninterrupted development from that of the earlier Church. When the populous east, with its seats of bishoprics, London, St. Albans, Lincoln, and York, fell into the hands of the Angles and Saxons, the Britons poured in numbers into Armorica, as well as into the thinly populated hilly districts of the west. Wales in especial received soon after A.D. 400 a great influx of emigrants from the northern districts between the two Roman walls, and consequently her political condition underwent a great change. There were no towns which could serve as centres of ecclesiastical organisation. But monasticism, which had flourished in Britain since the end of the fourth century, created new centres for the Church in Wales. And when after the defeat of the Saxons at Mons Badonicus (before the year 504), the Britons in Wales enjoyed a time of comparative peace from outside, a period of transition commenced in the inner constitution of the country. The countless small, independent territories were amalgamated into large wholes—of a shifting char-

[1] Mommsen, *Chronica Minora*, iii. 9; and Zimmer, *Nennius Vindicatus*, pp. 291–336.

acter at first—and the numerous dioceses, each based on the monastery of a clan, and comprising the territory belonging to it, gradually gave way to larger organisms.

Four bishoprics.

At the second conference of St. Augustine with the representatives of the British Church in A.D. 603, seven British bishops were present.[1] In the course of the seventh century the political situation became clear, the separate districts combined into four chief territories, and the ecclesiastical organisation of Wales was *definitely* fixed by the constitution of four bishoprics: Bangor on Menai Straits, in Gwynedd, St. Asaph in the north-east, in Powys, Menevia (St. David's) in the south-west, in Dyfed, and Llandaff (near Cardiff) in the south-east, in Gwent. These bishoprics were independent of each other, thus faithfully reflecting the ecclesiastical order before the Saxon invasion. They were based on the chief monasteries of the above territories — monasteries under the immediate control of the bishop—for in most cases abbot and bishop were one and the same person. The other monasteries of the diocese, presided over by independent abbots, were gradually subordinated to the bishop. Thus in the tenth-century code the seven monasteries of Dyfed are denoted as the "seven bishop's houses" of the Bishop of Menevia.[2]

According to the *Annales Cambriae*, the founders of the four extant bishoprics died in the following years:

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 2. Septem Brittonum episcopi.
[2] See *Ancient Laws of Wales*, Dull Dyved, ii. 24.

Daniel of Bangor in 584, David of Menevia in 601, Dubricius of Llandaff and Kentigern of St. Asaph in 612.

**Inner life of the Church.**

The inner life of the British Church during the period of peace, from outward enemies, which ensued after A.D. 500 and lasted for the greater part of the fifth century, as well as her influence on her disciples, would appear in a very sad light if we gave literal credence to the assertions of Gildas, writing about the year 547. But his description is no matter-of-fact account of the British Church of his day, but rather the penitential sermon of a man who delights to paint everything in the blackest colours, a man animated by the most rigid monastic ideas, with whom, for instance, *convertere ad Deum* means "to go into a monastery."[1]

**Gildas' account.**

We have only to go a step beyond the monastic ideal expressed by Gildas to arrive at the anchorite's life, representing, so to speak, a higher grade of Christianity. And we learn from Bede[2] that in Wales also (during the sixth century) the life of the anchorite arose out of that of the cloister, and kept its connection with it.

**Points of difference between the British Church and the Roman Church.**

§ 19. A circumstance which in itself promised well for the release of the British Church from her isolation of 150 years' standing, served but to isolate her all the more for another 150 years and longer. This was Gregory's mission to the Saxons. The points in which the British Church in St. Augustine's time differed from the Roman were these :—

[1] See *Chronica Minora*, iii. 43, 11, 14. [2] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 2.

1. Observance of the Easter festival according to the old computation, which, before the severance of the British from the Western Church, had also been used in Rome.

2. Certain differences in the baptismal rite.[1]

**Failure of Augustine's mission in Wales.**

These differences were certainly not of such a nature as to preclude the assent of the Britons to the demands which the Roman Church made with a view to reunion. It is true the Britons resented the haughty bearing of St. Augustine during the two conferences. Yet this can only have been a pretext. The real reason lay deeper, and was to be found in their national hatred of the hereditary foe whose chief representative they saw in St. Augustine. A sufficient proof of this is the demeanour of the British Church towards the Christian Saxons and Angles during the whole of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, as it is described by Bede[2] and the still more graphic Aldhelm.[3]

**Intercourse between the Welsh and Irish Churches during the sixth century.**

During the fifth and sixth centuries the Welsh Church kept up a lively intercourse with the Church of South Ireland, whilst her connections with the east were obstructed, or altogether interrupted, by the wall of barbarians surrounding her. But when about 630 the Church of South Ireland conformed to Rome, the Welsh Church was also severed from the west. We find Irish canons directed against Welsh clerics.[4] For the spiritual culture of the British Church, this isola-

[1] *Cf.* above, § 2.

[2] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 20.

[3] *Monumenta Germanica, Epistol.*, tom. iii. 233.

[4] See Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 330, 33.

Isolation of the Welsh Church in the seventh century.

tion on all sides proved fatal. Even Gildas, the most eminent of her representatives in the sixth century—he died in 570—cannot be compared with a somewhat younger representative of the Irish Church, Columbanus of Bobbio, if we may judge of his classical education from the quotations in his works.[1]

Nennius.

We meet with no name of literary merit in the Welsh Church until the end of the eighth century, when Nennius compiled the "History of the Britons." But what a poor figure does he cut as a scholar if we compare him with the Anglo-Saxons Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin, or with the Irish scholars of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries.[2]

Introduction of the Roman Paschal computation in the eighth century. Beneficial effect on the Church.

The extrication of the British Church from an isolation leading to intellectual ossification was begun by Bishop Elbodug of Bangor. According to the *Annales Cambriae* he introduced the Easter calculation of the Roman Church in 768; but the *Chronicle of Welsh Princes* gives the date as 755, and states that South Wales followed the example set by the north in 777.[3] Yet opposition by no means ceased to exist, for the same source informs us that in 809, at the death of Elbodug, "a great dispute arose among the clerics because of Easter, the bishops of Llandaff and Menevia refusing to submit to the Archbishop of Gwynedd, themselves claiming to be archbishops (*i.e.* independent bishops) of older standing." Thus it seems that followers of the Anglo-Roman Church

[1] See Mommsen, *Chronica Minora*, iii. 6.
[2] See Zimmer, *Nennius Vindicatus*, p. 274.
[3] See Haddan and Stubbs, i. 204.

had won over Elbodug of Bangor by intimating that he should attain to the rank of a metropolitan in Wales, although this rank was unknown to the British Church of his day, which in this respect still faithfully reflected the ecclesiastical state of the fourth century.

### *B.* THE IRISH CHURCH IN IRELAND AND NORTH BRITAIN

Flourishing state of the Irish Church in the sixth century.

§ 20. As soon as we can draw on native or foreign sources, *i.e.* in the sixth century, we meet a flourishing Christian Church in Ireland. Her type is that of a missionary Church, yet she is not based on the activity of one single man—a theory of which the sixth century knows nothing—but she gradually develops through the steady work of a missionary monkhood. And as the country was split up into many tribes, there was no attempt at centralisation. The seed sown in the south-east of Ireland by British missionaries ever since the middle of the fourth century sprang up and increased, undisturbed by the outer world.

Current views of the collapse and subsequent revival of the Irish Church, and their groundlessness.

So far the actual facts. But the prevalent theory is quite different. On the one hand it presupposes what is altogether incomprehensible, a complete collapse of the Irish Church at the end of the fifth century, while on the other hand a revival is supposed to have taken place in the sixth century, due to the influence of the Welsh Church, especially to such men as Gildas, Cadocus, and David. The hypothesis of a complete collapse of the Irish Church towards the

year 500 is based on the *imaginary* picture of the Church of the fifth century drawn at the time when the Patrick legend made its appearance in the seventh century. And the curtain had to be dropped over this picture, however suddenly and inappropriately, to make room for a supposed new structure representing the actual state of things in the sixth century.

The hypothesis that Britons were active in restoring the Irish Church in the sixth century has three foundations :—

1. Statements made in a Life of Gildas concerning his activity in Ireland ; this life was written at Rhuys in Brittany in the eleventh century.

2. The *views* on the Irish Church during the fifth and sixth centuries expressed in the Catalogue of Irish Saints, which was written in the eighth century, long after the Patrick legend had made its appearance.

3. Notes of some Lives of Saints which can certainly not be dated earlier than the tenth or eleventh century.[1]

The apparent want of critical insight shown in accepting the hypothesis on such insecure foundation is regrettable. A simple examination of dates shows how untenable it is. Finnian of Clonard, the father of the so-called "Twelve Apostles of Ireland," who, according to a statement by Columbanus of Bobbio, corresponded with Gildas on rules of monastic discipline,[2] died in 548. Columbanus founded the monastery of Derry about 546 and that of Durrow

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, i. 115.

[2] See *Monumenta Germanica*, *Epp.* iii. 156 *seq.*

before 560. Ciaran, who died in 548, founded Clonmacnois in 541. Comgell founded Bangor in Ulster either in 554 or 558. Brendan founded Clonfert in Longford in 552. In 563 Columba went to Hi.

On the other hand, it is certain that Gildas was in Ireland on ecclesiastical business in 566 during the reign of King Ainmire.[1] And are we to believe the authority of a Rhuys monk of the eleventh century that, at a time when Columba was already in Hi, Ireland was suffering from a state of semi-paganism, which had to be eradicated by Gildas?[2] On his return to Rhuys, Gildas may have given an exaggerated description of what he had seen, in the same spirit that inspired his penitential sermon to the British Church in the first half of the sixth century. And this tradition would seem to have formed the basis on which a monk of the same monastery, living five hundred years later, founded the awful picture of the state of the Irish Church about 565. Gildas.

Is it not altogether irrational to suggest that the British Church, which Gildas, speaking of the period *before* 547, depicts in such gloomy tints, should at that very time have been instrumental in regenerating the Irish Church? Apart from Gildas' visit we have no evidence of British influence. We know on the surest authority that St. David died in 601, while Cadoc, the date of whose death is unknown, is considered his contemporary. These men could not have been influencing the Irish Church before their

[1] See Mommsen, *Chronica Minora*, iii. 6.
[2] Ibid., iii. 94, 95.

very births, for the new life with which they are supposed to have inspired her produced a Finnian, whose years of fruitful activity came to a close in 548 !

The statements of ignorant authors of Saints' Lives, who confuse different centuries with each other, can offer no *basis* for a historical construction at variance with all fixed dates. Nor should the following point be neglected. The Welsh Church in which Gildas († 570), Cadoc, and David († 610) were active was, as we have seen, an *Episcopal Church*, like the British Church of the fourth century. The monastic element was strong, but it did not stamp its character and forms on her. If, indeed, these men and their like had instilled new life into the dying Irish Episcopal Church, it is hard to understand why they, of all men, one of whom, David, was himself Bishop of Menevia, should have founded in Ireland an entirely *monastic* Church, without any traces of an episcopal character.

**Superiority of the Irish Church.**

§ **21.** Between the Irish Church and that of the south-west of Britain a lively intercourse must have existed all through the sixth, no less than during the two preceding centuries. But if the question is asked : Which branch of the Celtic Church was the giver, and which the receiver ? the answer must surely be that the gift was on the part of the Irish Church. The fifth century saw the complete collapse of the organisation of the British Church, which left her in a state of great distress and trouble, whence, according to Gildas' own statement, she emerged but slowly and with difficulty during the first half of the sixth

century. Meanwhile the Irish Church could give herself up to her own development in undisturbed leisure. The high standard of classical education in the Irish monasteries from the sixth to the ninth century, to which numerous Irish manuscripts of classical authors bear witness, can only be explained if we assume that Ireland, or at least the south-east of Ireland, had embraced Christianity, and with it ancient civilisation and learning, as early as the end of the fourth century, and was able to develop the alien culture without disturbance from outside. In Ireland alone could the cultivation of classical learning be propagated and fostered, at a time when everywhere else, in Britain, Gaul, and Italy, hordes of barbarians well-nigh succeeded in stamping it out. The threadbare classical erudition of Gildas, and the low standard of the Welsh Church during the seventh and eighth centuries, are convincing proofs enough that the foundations of classical learning in Ireland cannot have been laid by British Churchmen of the sixth century. If they had, how account for the fact that the erudition of Irish monks at that time surpassed on the whole even that of Italy? For Greek was taught in Bangor and other monasteries, while Gregory the Great, for instance, in all probability had no knowledge of the language.

**Irish monks in Britain and Armorica**

We also possess direct proof that from the very beginning of the sixth century Irish clerics went to the south-west of Britain, as well as to Brittany, imparting and spreading knowledge, not receiving it. They were, so to speak, the pioneers of those later

expeditions into Frankish territory, from the end of the sixth century onwards. In 884 the Breton monk, Wrmonoc, in his monastery of Lendevenec in Brittany, wrote a Life of St. Paul of Léon,[1] who lived at the beginning of the sixth century. This Life is based on written sources, and the associates of St. Paul who had come with him from the south-west of Britain are quoted, with their full names. On one of them, Quonocus, there is the additional remark: "Whom some, adding to his name after the fashion of the people oversea, call Toquonocus;" and further on we read that the name *Woednovius* in the same way had a second form, *Towoedocus*.[2] We meet with several other instances of an additional familiar name being given to Breton and Welsh personages of the sixth century. Thus the founder of the monastery of Landevenec, where the above-named Life was written, was originally called Winwalve, but To-win-oc or Toguennoc is the familiar form of the name, after which the monastery was called *Lan-devennec*, being a later form of *Lan Teguennog*, *Lan Toguennog*.

What could Britons in Brittany and in the south-west of Britain mean by the "people over the sea," with whose clergy their own associated, and in imitation of whom, contrary to all British habit, familiar names were occasionally formed? *A priori* one would think of Ireland, and facts crowd in upon us to corroborate this view.

[1] See *Revue Celtique*, v. pp. 417–58.

[2] Ibid., p. 437. Quonocus, quem alii additamento more gentis transmarinae Toquonocum vocant.

Irish custom of giving additional familiar names to one and the same person.

During the sixth and seventh centuries the custom prevailed in Ireland, and especially in the monasteries, of forming familiar names from the full name-form which always consisted of two components, such as *Beo-gne*, *Lug-beo*, *Find-barr*, *Aed-gen*, and *Aed-gal*. It was done by taking one component of the full name and adding the diminutive ending *-ān*, *-iān* (e.g. *Beoān*, *Findān*, *Finniān*, *Aedān*), or by prefixing *mo-*, *to-*, and often adding *ōc* as well, like *Maedōc* (=*Mo-Aed-ōc*), *Molua*, *Tolua*, *Mernoc*, *Ternoc*. Thus a person of the name of *Beogne* was familiarly called *Beoān* ("little Beo"), *Mobeōc* ("my little Beo"), or *Dobeōc* ("you little Beo"); in the same way, *Lugbeo*, *Luān*, *Molua*, *Moluān*, *Tolua*, *Moluōc* all denote the same person; similarly, *Becān*, *Mobecōc*, *Tobecōc*, *Ernān*, *Mernōc*, *Ternōc*, &c.[1] How strong must the influence of the Irish element at the beginning of the sixth century have been in the monasteries of Brittany and of the south-west of Britain, if British monks imitated this truly Irish way of forming familiar names! It is, then, not surprising that among the Breton saints of the sixth and seventh centuries we find a dozen or more who by tradition and name are Irish,[2] and who, as we have said before, were the precursors of later pioneers penetrating into Frankish territory, such as Furseus, Columbanus, Gallus, and their successors.

Historical aspect of the Irish Church.

§ **22.** Thus neither Gildas († 570), nor David († 601), nor Cadoc († about 600), nor other Britons can have

[1] See *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, 32, pp. 175–190.

[2] See Loth, *L'Emigration bretonne*, pp. 164 *seq.*

regenerated the Irish Church during the first decades of the sixth century, nor was it then or before in a state of collapse. On the contrary, the Irish Church, having been spared the contact with barbarians in the fifth century, was able to extend a helping hand to the hard-suffering mother-church in Britain, and thus to pay back part of her indebtedness. It is true that Finnian of Clonard, who died in 548, founded Clonard about the year 520, and that a number of new monasteries were erected in Ireland between 540 and 560[1] by men looked upon as his pupils. But this cannot be regarded as a restoration or reformation of the Irish Church, for, leaving alone inferences drawn from the above statements, there existed at that time a great number of older monasteries. I need only mention Emly in Munster and Armagh in Ulster, the record of whose foundations is lost to the Annals. These ancient monasteries played for centuries together a far greater part in the *whole life* of the Irish Church than Finnian's foundation, or any one of the monasteries founded by his pupils between 540 and 560. Finnian lives in the memory of the Irish as the founder of a monastic rule, and we cannot be far wrong in assuming that his activity during the third and fourth decades of the sixth century resembled that of Benedict of Nursia. For his monastery of Clonard was founded on stricter monastic rules, while the ancient institutions bore the character of missionary stations rather than of monasteries. Through Comgall and Columba the new system was adopted

**Finnian of Clonard.**

[1] See above, § 20.

in Bangor and Hi, and served thenceforth as a model for the Irish monasteries in North Britain and on the Continent.

Irish monasteries the seats of learning and culture.

Thus we have every reason to regard the Irish Church from the sixth till the eighth century as a unity built up, without any interference from outside, on the foundations laid in the two preceding centuries, while the high standard of learning in the Irish monasteries, kept up till the ninth century, stands in direct connection with the classical culture of the Christian Church of the West at the end of the fourth century. The high reputation of Irish learning among Angles, Saxons, and Franks is perhaps best shown by the letter written in the seventh century by Aldhelm on the occasion of a young friend's return from the Irish schools. In it he reluctantly acknowledges the superiority of Irish learning.[1] As for the eighth century, Bede in several places speaks of Irish learning in terms of praise.[2]

Love of travel of Irish monks.

Another characteristic of the Irish monk was his *consuetudo peregrinandi*, as Walafried Strabo expresses it in the ninth century.[3] Single individuals or groups of three, seven, or twelve were seized with the desire of separating themselves from the large colonies of monks—for such the Irish monasteries were—and went to live in still greater seclusion from the world. At first they were satisfied with the little isles in their native lakes and rivers, not far from the

[1] Migne, 89, 94, 36 *seq.*
[2] *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 7, 27.
[3] *Monumenta Germanica*, ii. 30.

monasteries forming a *civitas*. Then they began to retire to the numerous islands off the Irish coast—*in mari eremum quaerere* was the term—and when these too were no longer places of solitude, a voyage in frail boats was risked on the northern seas to search out some desert isle in the ocean. Thus it was that in course of time Irish monks came to the Hebrides, Orkneys, Shetland Isles, nay, even to Iceland, so that in 825 the Irishman Dicuil, writing in the land of the Franks, could give minute details on Iceland which he had received from Irish monks about 795.[1]

**Various expeditions.**

About the same time other Irishmen went to the south-west of Britain, whither they were driven by the same impulses. Many Christian inscriptions of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, with Irish names and written in Ogham, bear witness to their presence north and south of the Severn bay. Thence they went to the British settlers in Brittany, as has already been stated, and made further expeditions into Frankish territory, advancing to the foot of the Alps and finally crossing them, so that Bobbio (or perhaps Tarentum) and Iceland form the limits north and south to Irish love of travel. Just as they had gone to Iceland without any thought of missionary work, so their expeditions to Brittany and into the kingdom of the Franks had no such purpose in view. But the state of things in the Frankish realm induced Columbanus of Luxeuil and his associates to expand their intentions and to become missionaries and teachers to a people,

**Irish monks on the Continent.**

[1] *S.B.A.*, 1891, p. 282 *seq.*

among whom they had originally settled to live a life of contemplation.

North Britain Christianised by Irish monks.

§ 23. We must look in the same light upon the greatest achievement of the Irish Church and her monks in the sixth and seventh centuries, the Christianisation of North Britain. Two Christian states existed in the sixth century on the west coast of North Britain: the kingdom of Strathclyde to the south of the Clyde, to whose king, Coroticus, Patrick had addressed his letter between the years 433 and 459, and the small Irish (Scottish) state to the north of the Clyde.

Columba.

Columba, born of noble parents in Donegal in 520, entered Finnian's famous school at Clonard, after having received his first instruction in several northern monasteries. Before 560 he himself founded the monastery of Derry in the north, and that of Durrow in the heart of Ireland. In 563 he left Ireland with twelve associates, desiring to go into exile for the sake of Christ, as his biographer, Adamnan, expressly puts it.[1] If Bede[2] makes Columba go to Britain with the desire of preaching the Gospel to the provinces of the Northern Picts, he must have anticipated the intention from the result. Columba settled with his companions in the little island of Eo (Io, Hi), belonging to the Irish state of North Britain. There, whence he could no longer see his beloved native shore, he founded a settlement, which naturally resulted in

[1] Reeves, *Adamnan's Life of Columba*, p. 9. Pro Christo peregrinari volens.

[2] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 4. Praedicaturus verbum Dei provinciis Septentrionalium Pictorum.

missionary activity among the heathen Picts of the north, whose territory was in his immediate neighbourhood. Thus the Picts became Christianised, and even during the lifetime of Columba a monastic Church arose, with the abbot of Hi for a head.

Church of Hi.

We cannot picture to ourselves in detail the activity of Columba and his associates, nor can we follow their successes step by step, because Adamnan, eighth successor to Columba, does not give us a full description of his hero's activity in the Life written about a century after Columba's death. Besides, there is no trustworthy information on the early times of all those monasteries founded by the Irish monks in the land of the Picts, because the Irish monks were expelled in 717—why, we shall see later on—and because during the ninth and tenth centuries the Vikings devastated all the monasteries. But it is clear that two events contributed to the success of Columba's work: he and his helpmates first went into the nearest districts of the Pictish kingdom, made a temporary stay there, and in daily intercourse with the people tried to acquire influence over them. Once having gained a firm footing, they would use it to advance their missionary stations further. Then Columba very soon (in 565) succeeded in obtaining the favour of Brude, the king, and winning him over to Christianity. On the death of King Brude, in 584, a Southern Pict ascended the throne, and thus the activity of the monks of Hi and of the many monasteries affiliated to Hi was extended to the land of the Southern Picts as well. At the time of Columba's death in 597, part

of North Britain, including the mainland to the north of a line from Glasgow to Edinburgh as well as the western isles, was studded with a number of monasteries, whose inmates concerned themselves with the spiritual welfare of the neighbouring population, and which were every one of them dependent on the parent monastery in Hi.

Extension of the Church into Northumberland.

§ **24.** A generation afterwards, the ecclesiastical domain of Columba's successor extended also over large districts south of the Firth of Forth, through the installation of Columba's Church in Northumberland. Already in 627 Edwin, who ruled over the united kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira, had been baptized in his capital of York by Paulinus, the chaplain of his Christian queen, and thus a beginning was made in extending the pale of the Anglo-Roman Church among the Angles south of the Tweed. But Penda, the heathen king of Mercia, who conquered and killed Edwin, put a stop to the spread of Christianity. Oswald, the rightful heir to the throne of Bernicia, was expelled the kingdom by Edwin, but when in 633, on returning from a long exile spent among the Christian Picts and Irish of North Britain, he possessed himself of the reins of government over the Angles in the north, he resolved to introduce Christianity in his kingdom. For that purpose he applied to Abbot Segene of Hi, who was then the head of the Columban Church in North Britain. The council of elders decided to send Aidan, a man of gentle nature, who was made bishop, and in his new dignity went out to settle in the quiet of Lindisfarn,

Aidan.

which belonged to Oswald's heirdom of Bernicia. There Aidan founded a monastery, and gained a powerful influence over the heathen Angles; for he embodied the teaching of Christianity in his own life. He specially devoted himself to the young generation, training boys for the service of the Church. His successors, Finian (652–661) and Colman (661–664), walked in his footsteps. Thus the Church in Northumberland, supported by the favour of Oswald († in 642) and his brother Oswy, made rapid and splendid progress. Monasteries were founded, such as Mailros by Aidan, the first nunnery by Heiu in Heruteu (Hartlepool), the dual convent for men and women at Coldingham by Oswald's half-sister, the monastery of Strenaeshalh by Hilda, &c. Christianity, in the form of the Irish Church, spread over the territory of the Northumbrian Angles as far as to the Angles living south of the Humber.

**The Paschal dispute between Rome and the Irish Church.**

§ **25.** To this flourishing state of the Irish Church in Ireland and North Britain the mission of the Roman Church among the Saxons became fatal.

Like her parent, the British Church, that of Ireland differed in several points from the Roman Church of Gregory's time, and consequently from the Anglo-Roman Church founded by Gregory's missionaries. Among these differences the most important were the form of tonsure and the calculation for fixing the date of Easter. It was just these outward signs of an independent Church, hallowed by the tradition of generations, that were clung to with almost incredible tenacity.

In 604 Augustine's successor, Laurentius, in common with his fellow-bishops, Mellitus and Justus, sent a letter to Ireland exhorting the Irish Church to conform in the above-named points to Roman usage, and thus to enter into the unity of the Church. But for the time this effort was without success.[1] In the course of the first quarter of the seventh century friends were won in south Ireland in favour of conformity to Roman usage with regard to the observance of Easter, partly through the journeys which South Irish clerics made to Gaul and Rome, and partly, perhaps, through the direct influence of the heads of the Anglo-Roman Church. But in 627 this Roman party was still in the minority in the south-east of Ireland, for Honorius' exhortation[2] to conform for the year 628, when the Irish and Roman Easter would be widely apart, was again unsuccessful. Then, in 628, Honorius inflicted excommunication upon Ireland, as Cummian relates in his letter to Segene of Hi.[3] In the following year the south-east of Ireland in most parts celebrated Easter according to Roman usage. In the districts lying between lines drawn from Dublin to Cork and from Dublin to Galway opinions wavered, and the abbots of the chief monasteries within them met in 630 at a synod at Mag Lena, near Tullamore, where they arrived at the decision to celebrate Easter in the coming year (*i.e.* 631) with the universal Church, for the Irish and Roman dates would have differed a

**Roman propaganda in the south of Ireland.**

**Synods of Mag Lena and Mag Ailbe.**

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 4.

[2] Ibid., ii. 19.

[3] Migne, 87, 997, 5.

whole month (April 21st and March 24th). Against this decision there rose a pupil of Comgall, Fintan, (also called Munnu) mac Tulchain, abbot of Taghmon, in South Ireland, and soon (*non post multum*) a new meeting was summoned to Mag Ailbe, at the foot of Slieve Margy, to the north of Carlow. There met in opposition Fintan, "chief and foremost of all those who defended the old Easter,"[1] and Lasrian (Molaisse), abbot of Leighlin, the representative of the "new order which had lately come from Rome."[2]

**South Ireland conforms to Rome. Stubborn resistance of North Ireland.**

As is evident from the furious invectives of Cummian against Fintan in his letter to Segene of Hi, the Roman party in South Ireland failed to score a decisive victory. They sent an embassy to Rome, which, laden with books and relics, returned in 633. Through the influence of these returning messengers, and through the opportune event of Fintan's death, in 636, the Roman party was finally victorious in the south of Ireland. After the return of the embassy, and before the death of Fintan (636), Cummian wrote his letter to Abbot Segene of Hi, in order to win over the most powerful church dignitary of North Ireland, next to the Bishop of Armagh.

**Pope John's letter.**

But in vain. Thereupon, in 640, in a letter partly preserved by Bede,[3] Pope John IV. addressed the heads of the North Irish Church, who are mentioned by name. They were the abbots of the most renowned monasteries of North Ireland, such as

[1] Princeps et primus eorum qui vetus pascha defendebant.
[2] Novus ordo qui noviter e Româ venerat.
[3] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 19.

Armagh, Bangor, Hi, Nendrum, Moville, &c. The Pope called those who were abbots and bishops at the same time, *episcopi*; but the others who, like the Abbots of Hi, had only the latter rank, he called *presbyteri*. But this papal missive met with no better success; the North Irish Church obstinately refused for nearly sixty years to enter the *unitas catholica*. Many attempts were made during this period to win over North Ireland, where the Bishop of Armagh had occupied a time-honoured position of great note ever since the Christianising of the north. Later times have spread a veil over these attempts, but we may without hesitation assume that the Patrick legend was one of the chief means used to work upon the North Irish Church and the Bishop of Armagh.

The appearance of the Patrick legend, and its object.

§ **26.** In the first quarter of the seventh century, the powerful personality of Columba was still fresh in the memory of the Irish: how, supported by princely favour, he had been the apostle of the Picts; and how he had created in North Britain a monastic Church dependent on Hi, and extending over a territory as large as Ireland. And similarly, it was almost within their own generation that Augustine had accomplished the same work among the Saxons, founding an Anglo-Saxon Episcopal Church, with the see of Canterbury for a centre.

Nothing definite, however, was known in Ireland about the beginnings of the Irish Church, which was divided into numerous independent monastic areas without any centre of authority. In the same way the Britons in Gildas' time had lost all recollection

as to the exact circumstances of the introduction of Christianity into Britain. But in the neighbourhood of Wicklow the memory was still cherished of a man called Patricius, who, some time in the fifth century, had claimed to have been singled out by God to be the bishop of Ireland. In the place where he had lived and worked, oral tradition was supported by writings of his own hand, couched in a language strangely discordant with Irish culture and learning of the seventh century, but suggestive in many passages of an apostle's activity among Gentiles. In these he called himself "the appointed bishop of Ireland." [1]

It would not require a long stretch of imagination if we assume that, about 625, Ireland's pious wish of having an apostle of her own was realised by reviving the memory of this Patricius, who had been forgotten everywhere except in the south-east. It was in this way, I think, that the Patrick legend sprang up with its two chief premises: first, that Ireland was entirely pagan in 432, as the lands of the Picts and of the Saxons had been in 563 and 597 respectively; and secondly, that Patrick converted Ireland within a short time, and introduced a Christian Church, overcoming all obstacles and winning the favour of King Loegaire, incidents analogous to Columba's conversion of King Brude, or Augustine's of Ethelbert of Kent. And if this legend was not expressly invented by an Irish member of the party in favour of conformity, it was, at any

[1] Hiberione constitutus episcopus.

rate, utilised at once by that party, as the first mention made of it by Cummian in his letter to Segene clearly shows. In enumerating the different paschal cycles he speaks of "that first cycle which our holy father Patrick brought and composed with Easter on moon 15 to 21, and Equinox, March 21."[1] From this it is clear that Cummian attributes to Patrick the introduction of the Dionysian cycle in Ireland, a cycle which was not introduced in Rome itself till the sixth century; in a similar way a representative of Rome at the conference of Whitby attributed to Peter the introduction of that cycle in Rome.[2]

Cummian's letter to Segene.

Thus the Patrick legend is characterised on its first appearance as serving the endeavours of the *Southern Irish* to enter into the *unitas catholica* by yielding to Rome on the Easter question. This enables us to understand why in the oldest Life of the legendary St. Patrick almost the whole of the second of its three sections is taken up with the description of the first Easter observance on Irish soil by Patrick, and of the incidents in connection therewith. This Life was written by Muirchu maccu Machtheni from the Wicklow district at the instigation of the monastic bishop Aed of Sletty from the Carlow district. The author further utilises the legend for winning over the *north of Ireland*, especially Armagh, to conformity to Rome. The latter event, as is well known, happened in 697, and it is remarkable that Muirchu maccu

Conformity to Rome of Northern Ireland.

[1] Migne, 87, 975: "Primum illum, quem sanctus Patricius papa noster tulit et facit [fecit]; in quo luna a decima quarta (xv.) usque in vigesima prima regulariter et aequinoctium a xii. Kal. April. observatur."

[2] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 25.

Machtheni, as well as Aed of Sletty, were present at the Synod when Flann Feblae, the abbot and bishop of Armagh, consented to the new order.[1] But even more remarkable is the trouble which Aed of Sletty took with Flann Feblae's predecessor Segene († 688) and with Flann Feblae himself to make them yield. An Irish note in the Book of Armagh tells us[2] that *Aed of Sletty subordinated his clan and church to the Abbot-Bishop of Armagh as the presumed successor of St. Patrick.* This is the same bait by means of which Elbodug of Bangor in Wales was caught, as we have seen before.[3] The prospect of rising to the rank of a metropolitan in the Irish Church, which so far had existed without an organised centre, finally won over the most important and influential personage in the long-resisting Church of the north, the Abbot-Bishop of Armagh. From the moment that the Bishop of Armagh had entered into the *unitas catholica*, at the same time sanctioning the Patrick legend (in 697), this legend is made to do service for the Church of Armagh and its bishop.

It is not within the scope of this sketch to give this subject a full and exhaustive treatment, but the inner development and transformation of the Irish Church until in the twelfth century complete conformity to the Church of Rome was arrived at, can in certain aspects only be understood if we take into consideration the numerous allusions in the Annals to the iron

[1] See Reeves, *Adamnan's Life of Columba*, pp. 50 *seq.*; 178 *seq.*, note *h*.
[2] See Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 346, 21 *seq.*
[3] See above, pp. 62, 63.

perseverance with which the Church of Armagh, in spite of all opposition from both north and south, drew the inferences from the Patrick legend for the Bishop of Armagh, the presumed successor to the "appointed bishop of Ireland."

Book of the Angel.

Meanwhile let me refer the reader to a document which, probably about 730, was written from this point of view, the so-called "Book of the Angel," preserved in the Book of Armagh.[1] Here an angelic message conveys to us the claims put forward by the Church of Armagh, supported by the Patrick legend in the accepted form which Muirchu maccu Machtheni and Aed of Sletty had given it. These claims, according to the Annals, met with violent opposition during the eighth and ninth centuries, both in Connaught and in Munster.

Defeat of the Irish Church in Britain.

§ 27. Before Northern Ireland had conformed to Roman usage with regard to the observance of Easter, the Irish Church in Britain had been struck a severe blow. At the court of Oswy in Northumberland (642–670), the Irish and Anglo-Roman Churches were brought into close contact by the circumstance that Eanfled, the queen, was a daughter of the King of Kent, and observed Easter according to Roman usage. To put an end to all the troubles and disputes resulting from this, even among the members of the royal family, Oswy in 664 summoned a conference to the monastery of Strenaeshalh, at which he himself presided. It was a fierce, obstinate combat, conducted chiefly with false historical arguments on either side

[1] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 352–356.

to settle the mode of tonsure and the observance of Easter. An artful device of the representative of the Anglo-Roman party excited misgiving in Oswy's mind lest St. Peter should keep the gates of heaven closed to him, and induced him to forsake the Irish party with whom till then he had always sympathised.[1] With angry hearts, Colman (664), together with the Irish and about thirty Angles, left Northumberland, going *viâ* Hi to the west of Ireland. In Mayo (Mag-eo) he founded a monastery for the Angles, which continued to flourish long after Bede's time, and he founded another in 667 for himself and his Irish in Boffin Island off the west coast of Mayo, where he died on August 8, 674.

**Exodus of Colman and his monks from Northumberland.**

Once the Angles had been won over to the Anglo-Roman Church, the endeavours became all the stronger to make the Columban Church in the rest of Britain give up her dissenting habits, at least such striking differences as existed in her mode of tonsure and the observance of Easter. When during 686 and the two following years Adamnan, the abbot of Hi and head of the Columban monasteries (679–704), was staying for some time on a political mission at the court of Aldfrid, in Northumberland, he was persuaded to yield in the above points. But on his return to Hi, he found that neither his own monastery nor those subordinate to Hi in the land of the Picts and in the north of Ireland would consent to the new state of things.[2] At variance with his own monks,

**Resistance of Hi.**

**Adamnan.**

[1] See Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 25.

[2] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, 5, 15.

Adamnan went to the north of Ireland and took a leading part in the attempts to make the North Irish Church yield. He as well as the Angle Ecgberct, who had come to the north of Ireland as the representative of the Anglo-Roman party, were present at the beforementioned synod (697), when through the Abbot and Bishop of Armagh joining the *unitas catholica*, the last resistance fell to the ground. In 703 Adamnan returned to Hi, where he died the next year without having been able to introduce the desired alterations in the Columban monasteries, including his own. Not till the second decade of the eighth century was the change ultimately affected in Hi and the subordinate monasteries on either side of the Grampians (Dorsum Albaniae). Nechtan, the king of the Picts, had since 710 been in favour of the clerics of his country joining Anglo-Roman usage concerning tonsure and the Easter cycle. Therefore he asked Ceolfrid, the distinguished Abbot of Yarrow (Durham), to help him in overcoming the refractory Columban clergy. This Ceolfrid did in 713 by a long letter on the Easter question, which Nechtan sent out in copies to all the clerics in the land of the Picts with an order to obey its contents.[1] Whosoever did not obey orders was expelled from the country in 717.[2]

**Ceolfrid's letter on the observance of Easter**

Thus, after losing Northumberland in 664, Hi in 717 lost its influence also on the land of the Picts, whither its founder had first brought Christianity, and the re-

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, 5, 21.

[2] Expulsio familiae Iae trans dorsum Britanniae a Nectano rege. See Tigernach and the *Annals of Ulster*.

**Conformity to Rome, and subsequent decline of Hi.**

turning faithful Columban clerics, who had left the Picts because they would not sacrifice the sacred customs of their fathers, had to undergo the sad experience of finding Hi itself gone over to the enemy. In 716 the Angle Ecgberct had come to Hi, and just as he had succeeded twenty years before, together with Adamnan, in winning over the clergy of North Ireland, so by dint of mild persuasion he induced the Abbot Dunchad and the majority of his monks to celebrate Easter in the year 716 according to Roman usage. Ecgberct remained in Hi until his death, which took place at Easter in the year 729, and it is due to his influence that conformity to Rome was at last arrived at, as Tigernach notes from his sources under the year 718 : *Tonsura coronae super familiam Iae datur*. Thus Hi was no longer the centre of a great *monastic Church*, as it had been in the middle of the seventh century, but, through its obstinacy in clinging to certain outward signs of independence and difference from the neighbouring Anglo - Roman Church, it was reduced to the position of a mere parent monastery with a few monasteries affiliated to it, situate on the west coast of North Britain, but belonging to the Irish state. Armagh, on the contrary, had through timely yielding and a persistent utilisation of the Patrick legend paved the way towards becoming the head of an *Episcopal Church* comprising the whole of Ireland.

# CHAPTER III

## THIRD PERIOD (A.D. 800–1200)

## THE COMPLETE ASSIMILATION OF THE CELTIC TO THE ROMAN CHURCH

### *A.* THE CHURCH IN WALES

The Church in Wales.

§ 28. Now that she had conformed to Anglo-Roman usage with regard to Easter and the mode of tonsure, the little Church of Wales differed but slightly from that of Rome; for, unlike the Irish branch of the Celtic Church, her organisation had from the very beginning been that of an Episcopal Church, and the few remaining points of difference were regarded as of small importance in the days of Augustine of Canterbury and of Bede. Under the stress of political circumstances, the process of assimilation to the Saxo-Roman Church continued, as a matter of course, from the days of Egbert of Wessex (836) onward, when Welsh chiefs began to seek the protection of English kings against the oppression of some mightier fellow-chief. The inroads of the heathen Norse, which since 853 were also felt in Wales, helped until well into the first half of the tenth century to establish friendlier political relations between England and Wales.

The state of culture of the Welsh clergy reached a higher grade after Wales emerged from her spiritual isolation by conforming to the Anglo-Roman Church in the matter of Easter and the tonsure. The appointment of Asser, nephew to Bishop Novis of Menevia, as teacher, counsellor, and friend of Alfred the Great, is a sufficient proof of this. Records exist, although not of absolute authenticity, that Bishop Cyfeiliawc of Llandaff, who died in 927, was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury. At the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century the consecration of the bishops of Landaff by the Archbishop of Canterbury seems to have been the rule.

During the time of the Anglo-Normans Lanfranc and Anselm (1070–1109), the see of Canterbury repeatedly interfered in Welsh ecclesiastical matters, as if the Welsh bishops were legally under the English primate, and, under the protection of the temporal power, Normans were preferred to Welsh bishoprics. Disputes respecting the boundaries of the Welsh dioceses of St. David's and Llandaff, and of the English diocese of Hereford, were submitted to the arbitration of the Roman see between 1119 and 1133. At that time the Bishop of St. David's began to put forth his claim to the rank of a metropolitan in Wales, and at the end of the twelfth century Gerald of Barri (Giraldus Cambrensis) made several journeys to Rome with this object in view, but without success. After 1187, when, as papal legate, Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury held a visitation in parts of Wales to preach the Crusade, the Welsh Church may definitely

be regarded as part of the English Church, although as late as 1284 the Bishop of St. David's still raised a formal protest against the visitation of Archbishop Pekham of Canterbury.

### *B.* THE CHURCH IN IRELAND

**The Irish Church of the ninth century.**

§ **29.** It is as yet impossible to give a systematic sketch of the development of the Irish Church during this period, in view of the defective nature of all existing special investigations. Before giving the fixed dates for the remodelling of the Irish Church in Ireland and North Britain after the pattern of the Roman Church, we must dwell on certain points, either for their significance in this period, or for the light they cast on the Irish ecclesiastical development. First among these, and deserving more attention than is usually bestowed upon it, is the influence exercised by the incursions and settlements of the Norsemen.

**The Viking period.**

The Viking period, which began in 795, and for more than 150 years made the British Isles a prey to plundering hordes of Norwegian and Danish heathens, plunged the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland into the deepest misery. Though the Welsh Church was to some extent affected by these invasions, it was as nothing compared with what the Irish Church in Ireland and North Britain had to suffer. The heathen Norsemen marked down the churches and monasteries which were the centres of civilisation and of the hated Christian religion. Numerous monasteries, such as Hi, Bangor, Menevia, and others, lay a tempting prey within easy reach of the seafaring pirates.

In Ireland the invaders followed the course of the rivers east and west, and thus penetrated with their fleets into the heart of the country. They established stations on the lakes in the neighbourhood of large monasteries. The wooden structures of the Irish monasteries fell an easy prey to the flames, and with them perished monks and libraries. Thus Hi had to undergo five visitations between 795 and 832, during which it was partly or entirely destroyed by fire, and on one of these occasions, in 806, no less than sixty-eight monks suffered "red martyrdom." Such manuscripts as had escaped burning were thrown into the water by the heathen barbarians, as we learn from an Irish chronicler of the beginning of the eleventh century, who has left an account of the whole period.[1] It is astonishing to see with what untiring patience the monks started rebuilding the monasteries again and again.

In Armagh a heathen Viking state was formed under the Norwegian Turgeis (Thorgils), compelling the abbot and bishop Forindan to flee to Munster. It lasted from 832 to 845. We are told that Otta, Turgeis' wife, seated on the high altar of Clonmacnois, gave "answers" (Ir. *frecra*) in the fashion of the early Teutonic prophetesses, such as that Veleda whom Tacitus has described.[2]

In the first half of the ninth century, many of the Norwegian heathens began to settle in the interior of Ireland, but they were either expelled or partially

[1] See Todd, *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*, p. 138.
[2] Tacitus, *Historiae*, iv. 61, 65; *Germania*, 8.

assimilated, through intermarriage and conversion to Christianity, and thus added a new element to Irish nationality. This state of things, however, changed when in 852 the Vikings founded a kingdom in Dublin, whose sway extended far into North Britain, and to which smaller Viking settlements in Waterford and Limerick were attached. Under the protection of this state, the heathen Norse continued to plunder and rob the districts on the Irish Sea for more than a century. The introduction of Christianity into this kingdom of Dublin only began in 943. The whole Viking period, varying as it did in length for different districts, had a deep influence on the Celtic Church.

**Irish monks on the Continent.**

§ **30**. We have already seen that, from the end of the sixth century onward, Irish monks went *peregrinandi causâ* into the kingdom of the Franks, where under the pressure of circumstance they became missionaries and teachers of the people.[1] Since the latter part of the eighth century they enjoyed special repute as teachers in the kingdom of Charlemagne. Remembering the political condition of Ireland after 795 we need not wonder to find the exodus of Irish teachers to the Continent steadily on the increase from the beginning of the ninth century. "*Quid Hiberniam memorem, contempto pelagi discrimine, pene totam cum grege philosophorum ad litora nostra migrantem?*" said Heiric of Auxerre in 876, in his preface to the *Life of St. Germanus*.

Throughout the kingdom of the Franks, at St.

[1] See p. 71.

Denis, Pavia, and on the Upper and Lower Rhine, we find Irish monks employed as teachers in the monastic schools, and they spread the repute of Irish learning so far that nowadays it is almost a truism to say : Whoever knew Greek on the Continent in the days of Charles the Bald was an Irishman, or was taught by an Irishman.[1] And what an abundance of manuscripts the Irish monks brought over to the Continent, or copied there ! Without counting the Irish manuscripts of the Vatican and the Bibliothèque Nationale, no less than 117 Irish written MSS., older than the eleventh century, or fragments of such, are still extant in continental libraries.[2]

**Decay of the Irish monasteries.**

§ **31.** For the Irish Church and her monastic schools, this continued exodus of the cultured classes, promoted by the unfavourable conditions at home, could not fail to prove fatal, especially as many of the manuscripts saved from the clutches of the barbarians were taken away to the Continent. It is therefore not surprising to hear from the Irish historian of the Viking period, already quoted, that King Brian (1002–1013) had to send scholars across the sea "in order to buy books."[3]

**Gradual dissolution of the monastic Church.**

The standard of education in the Irish monasteries was bound to sink lower and lower with each succeeding generation during the ninth and tenth centuries. The priesthood which succeeded the

[1] See Zimmer, *Bedeutung des irischen Elements für mittelalterliche Kultur*, *Preussische Jahrbücher*, 59, 26–59 ; and Traube, *O Roma nobilis*, 332–363.

[2] See W. Schultze in the *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 6, 287–298.

[3] See Todd, *Codagh Gaedhel*, p. 138.

highly cultured monks of the seventh and eighth centuries was in every respect inferior, and naturally had much less power to resist the forces which were substituting for a native monastic Church an episcopal one with a metropolitan head. Nor must we forget that the ninth century saw the destruction, especially in South Ireland, of many a memorial preserved in monkish libraries, and going back to a period earlier than that of the alleged apostle to the Gentiles (Patrick).

So far from burying their private disputes in order to confront their common foe the Norsemen, the Irish chiefs and princes thought the time of universal trouble and unrest a splendid opportunity for settling their native feuds, and for this purpose they frequently engaged small troops of Vikings as mercenaries. To every attentive reader this is proved by the Annals of Ulster as well as by the fact that during the ninth century and up to about 950, Irish monasteries had to suffer not only from the destructive attacks of the heathen Norse, but also from the aggressiveness of neighbouring native chiefs; not to mention the fierce and bloody feuds between different monasteries whose interests happened to clash. Since the large old monasteries were the centres and heads of monastic dioceses, events such as these were, no doubt, determined by territorial changes arising from political conditions, which in turn affected the interests of the monastic dioceses. And thus the loose yet firmly knit organisation of the native monastic Church, as it had

existed in the fifth and following centuries, was dislocated and broken up. On the other hand, the Patrick legend had become a sort of dogma during the eighth century, and the original position of the bishop in the Church government must have served as an additional element in loosening the firmly welded edifice of the *monastic* Church of the sixth and seventh centuries.

**Growing prominence of the episcopal rank.**

In the ninth-century text called the "Vision of Adamnan" the relation of Pope Silvester to the Emperor Constantine is adapted to popular Irish views by calling Silvester simply "Abbot of Rome," and in a poem quoted in the oldest Irish metrical martyrology, in a note on the 12th of March, Gregory the Great is again simply denoted as "Abbot of Rome of all Latium."[1] If Patrick, as the expanded tale of the ninth century has it, really resigned the work connected with the position of abbot soon after the foundation of the monastery at Armagh, confining himself to the administrative functions of *episcopus*, or rather metropolitan, this attitude could not for ever remain without influence on the relation between the rank of abbot and bishop in the Irish Church. In the majority of Irish monasteries—those of the Hi community being excluded—the abbot who ruled the monastic diocese had also been consecrated bishop, although there were generally one or more among the monks who had received the consecration as well. These conditions could easily be influenced by different impressions received from the Patrick

[1] Stokes, *Félire*, p. lxiii.

legend, which are also reflected in the Catalogue of Irish Saints. Gradually, without any special revolution, a new condition might arise, such as the Welsh Church arrived at towards the end of the sixth century, when the abbot and bishop of the parent monastery felt he was the head of the diocese by virtue of his position as *bishop*.[1]

**Confusion of the Viking period with the Patrician era in the sources.**

§ **32.** It is characteristic of the author of the oldest Life of St. Patrick, that he knows nothing at all about real Irish paganism, and has to resort to the Old Testament and to the tale of the struggle between Peter and Simon Magus,[2] in order to equip the druids, whose names had survived in literature, with heathen traits. This gap was soon filled in during the Viking period. Throughout a period of 150 years the vigorous paganism of the Norsemen could be seen in many places. It is not likely that the Vikings, who during the second half of the ninth century had settled in small numbers in the interior of Ireland, turning Christians and intermixing with the Irish, shook off all pagan ways at once, nor can this be said of the Vikings in the independent kingdom of Dublin and its dependencies of Waterford and Limerick, who were only converted a century later, after 943. To judge from similar conditions in Germany, a thinly veneered paganism must in many cases have been practised by the "foreign Irish," as the converted half-hibernicised Vikings were called.

The low level to which culture had been reduced

[1] See above, p. 59.

[2] See G. T. Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 75 *seq.*

in the Irish monasteries very soon permitted a confusion between periods so distant as the time of the alleged Christianising of Ireland by Patrick and of the Viking period in the ninth century. The newly redacted Lives of many saints testify to this error. Thus, according to one biography, Cainnech, the friend of Columba of Hi, and Abbot of Aghaboe, who died in 598, when the younger Columban was already in France, had, in the midst of the sixth century, to eradicate pagan practices in Leinster. But this as described is typical of Norse paganism such as was no doubt to be found in Leinster during the ninth century when the saint's Life was compiled.[1]

**Struggle of the see of Armagh for primacy.**

In the tenth and eleventh centuries we find statements in records written in the Irish tongue to the effect that Patrick forbade certain practices of gross paganism. These, which are minutely described and named, betray more or less distinctly their Norse origin.[2] At first this may have been a mere pedagogic device of Irish monks, for the benefit of the "foreign Irish," who continued practising their heathen customs in spite of their nominal Christianity. But at the end of the tenth century the see of Armagh tried to utilise this confusion of facts for its own interests. As can be seen from the Annals of Ulster, the Bishop of Armagh, making free and unscrupulous use of his opportunities, succeeded to a certain extent, between 730 and 850, in attaining that primacy in the Irish Episcopal Church, the claims to which were

[1] See the author in *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1891, p. 186 *seq.*

[2] See the author in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, 35, 147.

based on the Patrick legend. The year 805 was decisive for Meath, 824 for Connaught, and 822, as well as Forindan's stay in Munster from 841 till 845, for the south of Ireland. Henceforth the see of Armagh had its tax-gatherers for St. Patrick's pence scattered all over Ireland. The Annals of Ulster call them *equonimi* (=*œconomi*); they are mostly the abbots of the respective districts.[1] The abbot and bishop of Armagh did not disdain to appear in person in the more outlying districts, in order to receive cows in lieu of St. Patrick's pence.[2] This state of affairs, of course, only held good for native Christian Ireland, but in 943, Amlaib mac Sitricca,[3] the powerful ruler of the Irish Viking state, who resided at Dublin, became a Christian in England whilst fighting for supremacy in Northumberland. Wulfhelm of Canterbury baptized him, and Edmund of England was his godfather.[4] As was natural, the Christian Church, spreading among his Norse subjects of the independent Viking state in the course of the tenth century, looked towards Canterbury, and in all probability drew its supply of clerics from England. Thus we find that the Viking bishops for the newly established Norse bishoprics of Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick were consecrated at Canterbury. This was certainly the case as regards Dublin even after A.D. 1040.

St. Patrick's pence.

The converted Vikings of the kingdom of Dublin acknowledge the supremacy of Canterbury.

[1] Annals of Ulster, 813, 868, 887, 893, 921, 928.

[2] Ibid., 972, 1050, 1106.

[3] In Norse: *Ólafr Sigtriggvasonr.*

[4] See Earle, *Saxon Chronicles*, pp. 116, 117; *Annales Wintonienses*, s.a. 942, with Liebermann, *Ungedruckte anglo-normannische Geschichtsquellen*, p. 68; Todd, *Cogadh Gaedhel*, p. 283 *seq.*

**The Patrick legend is used by Armagh to establish its supremacy over Dublin.**

It must have sorely grieved the Bishop of Armagh to forego the revenues from the rich young Norse communities in Dublin at the end of the tenth century. Otherwise it would be hard to understand why one of his adherents, utilising the story already mentioned of the Vikings' conversion by Patrick, should have described with special detail how the saint converted the heathen Norse of Dublin (who up to 943 had remained perfectly pagan), and how consequently the successor of "Patrick of Armagh with the great revenues" was entitled to an ounce of gold "from each nose" in the Viking state of Dublin. The poem in which this claim is put forth is inserted in the *Lebor na Cert*[1] or Book of Rights, a compilation dating from the days of Brian Boroma (who died in 1014), and from internal evidence[2] must have been made between 994 and 998. In another Irish record of that time we again find the statement that Patrick converted the Vikings, though it is not bluntly used to serve a self-interested policy as in the case of Armagh.

This statement is likewise implied in the story which arose at that time that Patrick shared in the redaction of the Irish laws, to which a representative of the Vikings was also summoned.[3]

**The Culdees.**

§ 33. Another phenomenon in the inner development of the Irish Church during this period deserves our attention, namely the appearance of the so-called *Culdees*. In one aspect the problem has been completely solved by Reeves. Hector Boece, the Scottish

[1] See *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, 35, p. 57 *seq.*
[2] Ibid., p. 64 *seq.* [3] Ibid., p. 54–57; 72 *seq.*

historian of the sixteenth century, is responsible for the theory that the spiritual association mentioned in Irish and Scottish records from the ninth till the twelfth century under the Irish name of *céli Dé*, or *colidei* in Latin, was a direct continuation of Irish monasticism from the sixth to the eighth century, nay, of Celtic monasticism in general. But this view of the *Culdei*, as Boece termed them, is without any historical foundation. Yet it is difficult clearly to define the origin and position of the *Colidei* in the Scoto-Irish Church of the third period. The Irish term *céli Dé* does not furnish us with a safe clue; it consists of the common noun *céle* and of the genitive of *dia*, "God"; "*céle* of God." The primary meaning of the Old Irish *céle* is "companion," from which many secondary meanings are derived, *e.g.* "husband." In the texts of the old heroic tales of Ireland many words are used in a popular application which have been taken over into the Irish of the Church. Thus *céle*, used with the possessive case of a proper noun, has an explicit meaning. Cuchulinn, the most celebrated hero of northern Ireland, who stands by Conchobar, as Hagen or Volker in the German tale did by the Burgundian kings, calls himself *céle Conchobair*, *i.e.* "*céle* of Conchobar," and Cuchulinn's charioteer and faithful companion again calls himself *céle Conculaind*, *i.e.* "*céle* of Cuchulinn."[1]

**Origin and meaning of the name.**

Therefore *céle Dé* originally denoted a man who had entered the service of God and given himself up to Him for life. With this agrees the application of

[1] See *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, 30, p. 36.

the phrase which is found in the oldest record extant in manuscript, of which Reeves did not know. It occurs in the Irish Glosses on the Commentary on the Psalms, attributed to Columbanus of Bobbio. There the Latin phrase *cuius dei iste est* is commented on by saying that in Latin *iste illius est* is synonymous with *iste ad illum pertinet*, and to this the Irish commentator adds: *Amal asmberar is céle dœ in fer hísin*, "As the saying goes, this man is *céle Dé*,"[1] whereby he indicates that the Irish phrase *céle dé* corresponds to the Latin *iste illius est*. Therefore *céle Dé* could originally, like *vir Dei* in Latin, be applied to monks and anchorites in general. Reeves has definitely proved that the term used from the ninth till the twelfth century does not denote the regular successors to the organised Irish monkhood of the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, but that it was applied to the members of spiritual associations whose existence cannot with any certainty be traced back beyond the close of the eighth century. Consequently, the associations of the *Colidei* — a word which probably was coined as resembling in sound and meaning the Irish *céle Dé* — must have been formed in Ireland towards the end of the eighth century, and an existing term of more general signification was then limited to the members of these associations. As far as can be inferred when the older sources which we can trust are so scanty, Chrodegang's monastic rule (749), which aimed at uniting the secular clergy of Metz, and

[1] Ascoli, *Il Codice Irlandese dell' Ambrosiana*, 1878, fo. 30 c, 3.

in its enlarged form was also applied to anchorites (*deicolae*),[1] was brought to Ireland in the eighth century by Irish monks, who in those times were to be found in the monasteries of Alsace and Lorraine. It was in accordance with this rule that those Irish anchorites who were not under the sway of monastic rule were first associated. In the monastic Church of Ireland proper, these associations of *Colidei* never attained to any great importance.

During these centuries we find them mentioned in nine places in Ireland, frequently in connection with monasteries of which the house of the Culdees seemed to constitute a sort of appendage or annexe. The nursing of the sick and the care of the poor are their chief occupations, in addition to which they seem to be entrusted with the choral part of the service.

**Importance of the Culdees.**

But in North Britain, whither they came from Ireland, the associations of the Culdees attained to much greater importance. Through the expulsion of the refractory monks of Hi by Nechtan in 717, large gaps had been left in the Church of the Pictish state, which could not be altogether filled by the Roman clerics pouring in from Northumberland. But the new associations of the Colidei apparently stop these gaps. In Scotland they appear as a mixture of secular clerics and of anchorites disciplined on the monastic pattern. In some places at a later period they resemble the regular canons of the Continent. There was a want of connection between the single convents of the Colidei,

[1] See Hefele, *Konziliengeschichte*, 4, 9 *seq.*

caused through the absence of a common head and the lack of fixed forms. This defect characterises the Celtic Church in general, and can be explained by the political conditions of the Celts. Hence every single convent was exposed to all the dangers from within and without which beset isolated communities in their local development. Thus it happens that almost contemporary descriptions of the twelfth century, referring to different associations of Culdees, differ greatly both as to the condition of these associations and in the judgments passed upon them.

But this last creation of the Celtic Church of Ireland was only half independent, and bears all the marks of a time of transition. It could not resist the Roman orders which were introduced into Ireland and Scotland during the twelfth century, together with the complete reorganisation of the Celtic Church after the model of Rome. The Colidei were absorbed in the orders, or among the regular canons.

**The increasing influence of Rome over the Church of Ireland.**

§ 34. The formal submission of the Celtic Church of Ireland and Scotland to the Roman Church (as distinguished from that process of effective communion, the stages of which have been traced in the preceding sections) began in the second half of the eleventh century. The development of the last three hundred years had made her ripe both within and without for this final step. In Ireland, the independent Norse communities of Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford, with their relations to Canterbury already mentioned, formed a con-

necting link. Thus, in 1074, when the opportunity arose, Lanfranc of Canterbury interfered with ecclesiastical matters in Ireland by the letter he sent to King Torlogh O'Brian through the Norse bishop, Gillpatrick of Dublin. At the instigation of both, Gregory VII. sent a letter to Ireland, at the same time appointing the Norse bishop Gilbert of Limerick to be papal legate for Ireland. In the seventh century the abbot and bishop of Armagh had been the centre of the opposition to the introduction of the Roman Easter-cycle into North Ireland. The present Bishop of Armagh, who had gradually won authority as the supposed successor of Patrick, now resisted the propagandist effort of Rome, so ardently carried on by Canterbury and the Viking bishops of Dublin and Limerick, to turn Ireland into a province of the Roman Church. At last Gilbert of Limerick found a man ready to fall in with his views, when in 1106 Celsus succeeded to the see of Armagh. At the synod of Rathbreasail in 1120, it was resolved to divide Ireland into twenty-four dioceses, which, with the exception of Dublin, were to be subordinate to Armagh. But a complete submission to the Roman Church was only accomplished under Celsus' two successors, namely Malachy, the friend of Bernard of Clairveaux, and Archbishop Gelasius (1137-1172). In 1152 the synod of Kells took place under the presidency of the papal legate Papiro, when Ireland was divided into four provinces, and Armagh was selected to be the see of the primate. In addition the bishops of Dublin, Cashel, and Tuam were also promoted to

**Final submission of the Irish Church in the twelfth century.**

**Division into four provinces, governed by archbishops, under the primacy of Armagh.**

the rank of archbishops, and received the pallia brought from Rome.

Jocelin's Life of Patrick.

The complete internal Romanising of the Irish Church was carried out in the interest of the Anglo-Normans at the synod held at Cashel by the command of Henry II. A few years later, between 1180 and 1185, the Cistercian monk Jocelin, at the instance of the primate of Ireland, Archbishop Thomas of Armagh, wrote a new *Vita Patricii*, utilising all the material at the disposal of the see of Armagh. This work, which, so to speak, forms the conclusion to the Patrick legend of the first third of the seventh century, also reiterates Armagh's sheer invention that Patrick converted the Vikings of Dublin. The passage occurs in the seventy-first chapter,[1] and is taken from the Irish poem in the *Lebor na Cert*,[2] with the additional remark that the invasion of the Anglo-Normans (1169–1172) made an end of the independence of the Viking state at Dublin. Jocelin, who wrote at the instigation of the primate of Ireland, explains the downfall of the Viking state by the remark that the insolent people, forgetful of the benediction of St. Patrick, neglected to pay the proper dues (*superbiens populus oblitus benedictionis S. Patricii debitos reditus neglexit persolvere*). In spite of the facts that the Church of the independent Vikings had already in 1152 submitted to the primacy of Armagh, and that in 1162 the Archbishop of Dublin was consecrated by the new primate of Armagh, the avidity of Armagh could not forget that for a whole

[1] See Colgan, *Triadis Thaum. Acta*, p. 90 *seq.*

[2] See above, p. 98.

century the St. Patrick's pence due from the rich Dublin merchants had been lost.[1]

### C. THE CHURCH IN NORTH BRITAIN

**The Celtic Church of North Britain.**

§ 35. In North Britain a united kingdom of Alban, which afterwards received the name of Scotland, was created in 844, when Kenneth MacAlpin, the ruler of the Irish state on the west coast, ascended the throne of the united Northern and Southern Picts. In 850 Kenneth had the bones of St. Columba removed from Hi, which monastery had decayed and become quite unsafe through the constant invasions of the Vikings. They were transferred to Dunkeld, the mainstay of his power in the land of the Southern Picts. By doing this and by establishing a bishopric at the monastery of Dunkeld, Kenneth apparently tried to form such a centre for the Church as Hi had been in the seventh century, only on a different basis necessitated by ecclesiastical changes. Thus Tuathal Mac Artguso, who was abbot and bishop of Dunkeld from 850 till 865, was head of the Church government, not through his position as abbot, but because he was the bishop.

**Kenneth removes St. Columba's bones to Dunkeld, where he establishes a bishopric.**

During the century which followed the expulsion of

[1] Of all the documents on Patrick, the Bollandists[1] quote nothing but the two writings of the historical Patrick—the *Confession* and the *Epistle* —and Jocelin's Life of the legendary Patrick. In the *Confession* they insert after *invisibilia*, contrary to the five manuscripts, the words: *Qui Filium sibi consubstantialem genuit*, adding the explanatory remark: *Haec aut similia verba in ms. Atrebatensi desiderari contextus indicat.*[2] In Jocelin's Life they simply omit[3] the chapter on the conversion of the Norse at Dublin by Patrick, referring the reader to Colgan.

[1] *Acta Sanctorum m. Mart.*, tom. ii. pp. 577–592.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 534, note *d*. [3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 555.

the Columban monks, the once monastic Church in the land of the Picts had fallen under the influence of the neighbouring Anglo-Roman Church, and grown into a state resembling that of the Celtic church in Wales about the year 600.[1] When, therefore, in 865 Kenneth's son, Constantine, removed the see of the bishopric to Abernethy, where it remained till 908, Dunkeld was left with an abbot only. In 908 the see of the primate was transferred to St. Andrews, and a parliament of the same year decreed that the Church should be exempt from taxation. There seem to have been inner reforms at the same time, such as the introduction of the canonical rule, which tended towards a closer union with the Roman Church of that period. The reformation of the Scottish Church, according to the institutions and pattern of the Roman Church, was energetically taken in hand by Margaret, the grand-niece of Edward the Confessor, after her marriage with Malcolm, King of Scots, in 1069. Turgot, Abbot of Durham, who was her confessor, rendered her every possible assistance, bearing in mind the interests of his Church. Her sons, Edgar (1097–1107), Alexander (1107–1124), and David (1124–1153), were chiefly intent on bringing about an outward conformity of the Scottish National Church to the Roman Church, in accordance with the internal changes and reforms which their mother had carried out. From 1093, after Fothad's death, the Church remained without a head, till in 1107 Turgot, the spiritual director of Margaret, was appointed to the see of St. Andrews. Simultaneously, or soon

**Removal of the bishop's see from Dunkeld to Abernethy, thence to St. Andrews.**

**Reformation of the Scottish Church under Margaret and her sons.**

**Primacy of St. Andrews.**

[1] See above, p. 59.

after, several new bishoprics subordinate to St. Andrews were established within the pale of the Church. In conformity with a decree of the Council of Windsor in 1072,[1] Turgot had been consecrated at York, while his successor, Eadmer (1115), a Canterbury monk, was elected and consecrated by Ralph Archbishop of Canterbury, at the desire of King Alexander. In 1188 the Scottish Church, through a bull of Clement III., was declared independent of Canterbury.[2] Like the Irish Church, she was henceforth under the direct sovereignty of Rome. By this time the inward and outward transformation of the Scottish Church into a province of the Roman Church was complete. The land had been divided into nine bishoprics with strictly defined dioceses, and the Augustine, Benedictine, and Cistercian monks, who were brought both into old and new monasteries, absorbed the remnant of the national Celtic monasticism.

**The Scottish Church under the direct sovereignty of Rome.**

**Division into nine bishoprics.**

## Conclusion

§ **36.** Not much remains to be added to our preceding statement of the relations and institutions of the Celtic Church during her prime (sixth to eighth century), that is to say, of Church government (ecclesiastical orders and degrees), monastic institutions, divine service and its rites, doctrine, &c. For although we differ widely from the current views with regard to the introduction and development of Irish Christianity down to the days of Columba, yet this does not affect the fundamental view, shared by

**Additional remarks on the Celtic Church during her prime.**

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, ii. 159. [2] Ibid., ii. 273.

most modern investigators, as to the relation of the institutions of the Celtic Church towards those of the Roman Church at the beginning of the seventh century. On the contrary, with regard to the Irish branch, this view receives fresh support from our statements. Neither from what tradition tells us about the doctrines and institutions of the Celtic Church, nor from what we know or may fairly conjecture about her history, do we receive any support for the hypothesis that the Celtic Church during her golden age greatly resembled the Church of the apostolic era in institutions and dogma. Just as Britain was part of the Roman Empire, so the British Church formed (during the fourth century) a branch of the Catholic Church of the West; and during the whole of that century, from the council at Arles (316) onward, took part in all proceedings concerning the Church. But the Irish branch of the Celtic Church was an offshoot of that British Church, and had sprung up as early as the fourth century.

At the beginning of the seventh century the institutions of the Celtic Church on either side of the Irish Sea showed divergences from the Church of Rome which are well attested. These, on a closer view, admit of full explanation. Above all, we must not forget the fact that in the Roman Catholic Church the position of the Roman bishop during the fourth century and up to the time of Leo the Great (440–461) differed from that of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) at the end of the sixth century. At the beginning of the seventh century rigid uniformity of institutions

was regarded as an essential requirement of the *unitas catholica;* but to the fourth century this idea was wholly foreign. Besides, many innovations took long to domesticate themselves with the distant branches of the Church.

Severance of the British Church from Rome at the end of the fourth century.

At the end of the fourth century the British branch of the Catholic Church, together with its offshoot in the barbarian isle, were severed from Rome, because political Rome had lost its hold on Britain.

To illustrate this point, let us consider the historical events of the fifth century and their immediate consequences. The Popes Innocent, Zosimus, and Boniface (418–422) all three energetically opposed the new doctrine of Pelagius; but its suppression was due purely to temporal Rome, when the Emperor Honorius, on April 30, 418, issued the rescript which threatened with exile every Pelagian in that city. When, in 429, the doctrine of Pelagius spread in distant Britain, the emperor's authority did not reach so far, and Celestine, the successor of Boniface, found himself compelled to adopt means of gentle persuasion by sending Germanus of Auxerre to the south-west of Britain. But even this link was snapped in the second half of the fifth century when a twofold, nay threefold, wall of barbarians, consisting of Burgundians, Visigoths, Franks, and Saxons, arose between Rome and Celtic Britain. The letter of August 454, in which Leo the Great, in order to avoid a schism with Alexandria, announced to the Western Church that the Easter of 455 was to be celebrated on April 24th — an un-

precedentedly late date for the West — seems, from notices in the Annales Cambriae, the Annals of Ulster, and the Annals of Clonmacnois, to have made its way even to Britain and Ireland.

Isolated position of the British Church for a period of nearly 150 years.

After this, for a period of nearly 150 years, all connection between the Celtic and the Church of the West is severed. Consequently the development of the Western Church left no impress whatever on the Celtic Church. Further, in the absence of any central court of appeal, political and local conditions must have exercised some influence on the institutions and usage of the Celtic Church and on each of its units. From all this we can understand how a Columban of Luxeuil dared to speak to the Pope in a way which two hundred years earlier would not have been remarkable in a bishop of Northern Africa or Alexandria. We can also understand how the British Church, which during the sixth century was re-established in the mountains of Wales, only knew of independent bishops, who lacked the connecting link of a metropolitan ; for the British Church at the time of her collapse, in the beginning of the fifth century, was still ignorant of this novel institution.

The Paschal date of the Irish Church, the universally acknowledged date of the fourth century Church.

§ 37. And again, the difference of dates in the Irish and British Churches for the observance of Easter is explained by the fact that the Celtic Church followed the older *supputatio Romana*, which was recognised at the time of the Council of Arles in 316, and was also followed by Rome till the year 343. The Irish remained faithful to the time-honoured custom of their fathers till after 600. Thus the Celtic Church

had been spared all the changes which Rome had gone through meantime, *i.e.* the younger *supputatio Romana*, 343–344; the Paschal table of Zeitz, 447–500; the nineteen years' Cycle of Victorius, from 501 until the middle of the sixth century; and the Cycle of Dionysius, from the middle of the sixth century onward.

The Roman Catholic Church of the fourth century had not yet developed that strict uniformity in her institutions which she possessed two hundred years later, and the Celtic Church clung firmly to old customs, as in the case of Easter. These facts will account, without the need of further description, for everything or nearly everything, that Augustine found contrary to Roman usage (*consuetudo*), nay, to the usage of the whole Church, about A.D. 600.[1] Also, the different *ecclesiasticae vitae disciplinae*, which the followers of the Anglo-Roman Church found fault with in the Irish, can be traced back to the same sources. Warren[2] has collected some material on this point.

Consecration by a single bishop.

§ 38. In both the British and the Irish Churches, long after their conformity to the Church of Rome, the consecration of a bishop could be performed by a single bishop, although the representatives of the British Church at the Council of Arles had signed the canon that seven bishops if possible, or failing that, at least three should officiate at a consecration. But this is not so surprising as Warren[3] seems to think. For Augustine's sixth question: If

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 2.

[2] Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, p. 64 *seq.*

[3] Warren, *loc. cit.*, p. 69.

the bishops had a great distance to travel, so that it would not be easy for them to come together, could one bishop perform consecration in the absence of the others? was answered by Gregory thus: In the Church of the Angles, in which so far you have been the only bishop, you can ordain a bishop even without other bishops.[1] In the same way Pope Boniface still permitted to Justus, Augustine's third successor, to consecrate bishops by himself if circumstances demanded it.[2] At the collapse of the Celtic Church, in the fifth century, British bishops must frequently have availed themselves of this dispensation when necessity arose; and during the gradual evangelisation of Ireland consecration in most cases would have been impossible unless performed by a single bishop. The English of to-day are a mixture of Teutons and Celts. If we remember the distinctive feature of their legal development, that custom and usage form a precedent for new law without the formal repeal of the older written code, we shall understand how in the Celtic Church consecration by a single bishop became during the sixth and seventh centuries custom and law as well.

**Superiority of the rank of abbot to that of bishop.**

§ 39. When we observe the markedly monastic character of the Irish Church and the position of her bishops, in contrast to those of the Western Church, we must bear in mind that the type represented by

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 27: Si longinquitas itineris magna interjacet, ut episcopi non facile valeant convenire, an debeat sine aliorum episcoporum praesentiâ episcopus ordinari? Et quidem in Anglorum ecclesiâ in quâ adhuc solus tu episcopus inveniris, ordinare episcopum non aliter nisi sine episcopis potes.

[2] Ibid., ii. 8: exigente opportunitate.

Hi and other monasteries, founded in the sixth century only, is not universal. On the contrary, in the old monasteries, whose origin is obscure, but which always formed the centre of monastic dioceses—as, for instance, Armagh in the north and Emly in Tipperary — we find that in the older period the abbots were always bishops as well. Thus the heads of the dioceses were abbots and bishops in one person, but they wielded the power of Church government by virtue of their position as abbots. This is explained by the political and social relations of the Celts, and by the date and manner of their conversion. None of the authorities that for a time seem to be superior to the clan or tribe—whichever name we choose to give it—including the shadowy overlord of Ireland, are either strong or permanent.

Importance of the clan.

The British missionaries of the fourth and fifth centuries, full of the monastic ideal which had just then taken hold of the West, would settle amidst one of these tribes, and on finding willing ears for the teachings of Christianity, they would receive from the chief of the tribe the necessary ground for a fairly large monastic missionary station. Naturally some members of the chief's family would belong to the new settlement from the very beginning; nay, it may have been usually founded by some such member, who presided over it in the position of a lay-abbot, a rank we frequently meet with in Ireland even in later times. Thus the chief's family in all its branches had a right to the succession as abbots, and in some authenticated cases retained it for centuries, so that

the interests of the Church and tribe stood in the closest relationship. But just as Augustine introduced Christianity into Kent before being a bishop, and then returned to Arles for his consecration, so in Ireland missionary stations must have existed for a time in the form of monastic settlements in the single clans, and some member of the chief's family must have looked after the ecclesiastical needs of the tribe, before the necessity was felt for a member who was authorised to perform episcopal functions. Assume then that the lay-abbot received consecration as bishop—and it should never have been questioned that the Irish Church, just as well as the Western Church, knew the degrees of deacon, presbyter, and bishop—it was only natural that, living as he did far away from the sight and influence of an Episcopal Church, he should continue to perform the functions relating to Church government in the Church of the tribe on the strength of his authority as abbot and member of the chief's family. These views were handed down from generation to generation, and thus arose the monastic Church of Ireland, resting on the basis of the tribe, and with nothing but a *de facto* episcopacy that could not claim jurisdiction on the ground of having been ordained.

We desist from any attempt to give a full picture of the Celtic Church during the sixth and seventh centuries in respect of doctrines and institutions. For although tradition has supplied us with ample material from which we gather that the Celtic Church is merely a slightly modified copy of the Western

Church in the fourth century, yet the sources from that period are too full of gaps to allow of our designing a complete picture. And a picture composed of mosaics could hardly approach reality, if we remember the peculiar characteristics of the Celtic Church, and the want of firm, universally recognised forms and institutions.

**Difference in the spirit of Christianity as shown by Celtic and Roman priests.**

§ **40.** One point, however, deserves special mention as characterising the Celtic Church in her prime. Great stress is laid chiefly by Catholic Church historians on the admission made even by Protestant inquirers, that neither in dogma nor in institutions did the older Irish and ancient Celtic Churches essentially differ from the Catholic Church. This opinion dissents from the prevailing views held upon the Celtic Church even in the later half of the nineteenth century, and though we may agree with it generally, yet no one who simply reads Bede's descriptions of the meeting of Rome's legates with the representatives of the Celtic Church on British soil can help feeling that the *spirit* which animated the Celtic clerics at the end of the sixth century differed greatly from that of the representatives of the Roman Church, and of those sons of the Celtic Church whom they converted. Here again the truth of the saying is confirmed that notes alone do not make up music. Quite a large number of single points can be quoted to characterise the new spirit which entered the Celtic Church of Ireland, when the older Irish Church joined the Roman Church of the seventh century. First of all we are struck by the spirit of *intolerance*

towards different views, and consequently by the spirit of *uncharitableness*, as was shown by Augustine towards the British bishops,[1] by Wilfrid towards Colman,[2] and by Aldhelm in his letter to Geruntius.[3] The Irish on the other hand, such as Columban on the Continent,[4] and the Irish in Northumberland, only demanded to be allowed to practise Christianity quietly after the customs of their forefathers, and in a way, as Bede says, conducive to apostolic life. But no sooner had an Irishman gone over to the Roman party, than a new spirit took hold of him. Ronan, an Irishman, who had been in Gaul and Italy, commenced quarrelling with the gentle Finan in Northumberland.[5] In spite of the papal excommunication, Cummian had still kept Easter of 629 according to the old date. In the following year, however, he made a special study of the question, with the result that at the synod of Mag Lena in 630 he voted for giving in to Rome. The opposition of Fintan mac Tulchain made it necessary to send an embassy to Rome, and when on its return in 633 Cummian and the Roman party received a new im-

**Spirit of intolerance and uncharitableness.**

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, 2, 2.
[2] Ibid., 3, 25.
[3] *Monumenta Germanica, Epist.*, tom. iii. 231.
[4] Ibid., i. 165.
[5] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, 3, 25: His temporibus quaestio facta est frequens et magna de observatione paschae, confirmantibus eis, qui de Cantiâ vel de Galliis advenerant, quod Scotti dominicum paschae diem contra universalis ecclesiae morem celebrarent. Erat in his acerrimus veri paschae defensor nomine Ronan, natione quidem Scottus, sed in Galliae vel Italiae partibus regulam ecclesiasticae veritatis edoctus. Qui cum Finano confligens, multos quidem correxit, vel ad solertiorem veritatis inquisitionem accendit, nequaquam tamen Finanum emendare potuit; quin potius, quod esset homo ferocis animi, acerbiorem castigando et apertum veritatis adversarium reddidit.

petus, Cummian at once began to make propaganda for Roman usage by his letter to Segene of Hi. In this letter he speaks of the successful opposition which Fintan mac Tulchain in 630 carried on in favour of Irish usage against the Roman party. And the pious wish escapes his lips, "that God might strike Fintan whichever way He liked."[1] This is how an Irish abbot, only just converted to Roman views, writes of one of his fellow-abbots to the head of the Columban monasteries before the year 636! And all because Fintan as well as Segene had not joined Cummian, who after 630 had completely conformed to Roman usage in the question of the Easter date.

**Deliberate falsifications in the interests of the Church**

The Irish of the sixth and seventh centuries show themselves credulous and lacking in critical insight in their arguments in favour of ancestral rites; but they never consciously deviate from the path of truth. This trait, the spirit of *deliberate* falsification in the interests of the Church, only appears in the Irish Church after her union with that of Rome. The Patrick legend furnishes a chain of proofs for this assertion, extending over more than 500 years. The two chief statements of the legend — namely, that Ireland was entirely pagan in 432, and that a certain Patricius, calling himself the appointed bishop for Ireland, had Christianised it, may possibly be based on pious delusion.[2] But Cummian's statement in his

**Patrick legend.**

[1] M.S.L., 87, 977: Quem Deus (ut spero) percutiet quoquo modo voluerit.

[2] See above, p. 80.

letter to Segene, that Patrick in 432 introduced the Dionysian Easter-cycle in Ireland, clearly bears upon it the mark of deliberate invention for the sake of a distinct purpose. Still clearer is the object of the other fabrication appearing in Muirchu maccu Machtheni's Life, that Patrick, of whom nothing was known in North Ireland, was the founder of the monastery of Armagh, and thus predecessor to the later bishop who held out in violent opposition to Rome. In the eighth century the Book of the Angel[1] is a piece of deliberate invention in the interest of the Church of Armagh. Through the following centuries, deliberate forgeries are to be found by the side of harmless inventions by imaginative minds. At the end of the tenth century, the pecuniary interests of Armagh required the story that the Dublin Vikings were converted by Patrick, although they in reality did not begin to turn Christians before the year 943.

In pursuing the development of the Patrick legend from its first appearance in Cummian's letter in 634 down to Jocelin's Life of St. Patrick, written between 1180 and 1185 at the instance of the primate of Ireland, we are constantly reminded of Herder's words: "Once the evil principle had been adopted that in the interest of the Church faith might be broken, lies invented, and fiction resorted to, the historical faith was violated. The tongue, the pen, the memory, and the imagination of mankind lost all rule and compass, so that instead of quoting Greek and Punic faith we

[1] See above, p. 83.

might, with far more reason, speak of Christian credibility." [1]

Another symptom of the new spirit which begins to pervade the Irish Church in the seventh century, after the first union with Rome, is the unprecedented extension which the cult of relics assumes. The following linguistic facts are worth mentioning: *Relic* (gen. sing. *reilce*, gen. plur. *relec*) in Old Irish means "churchyard, cemetery," and in modern Irish *reileag* still denotes "a churchyard." In old time the meaning of "relic" was so little attached to the word, that a famous Old Irish treatise on the great cemeteries of Ireland in *heathen* times bears the title: *senchas na relec*, *i.e.* "The Ancient History of Burial Places." [2] In the county of Tyrone near an old parish church we still find the place-names *Relig-na-man*, "the Women's Cemetery"; "*Relig-na-paisde*, "Children's Cemetery"; and *Relig-na-fear-gonta*, "Cemetery of the Slain Men." [3]

**Cult of relics.**

**Original meaning of "relic."**

[1] Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte*, xvii. 1: Nachdem einmal das böse Prinzip angenommen war, dass man zum Nutzen der Kirche Untreue begehen, Lügen erfinden, Dichtungen schreiben dürfe, so war der historische Glaube verletzt; Zunge, Feder, Gedächtnis und Einbildungskraft der Menschen hatten ihre Regel und Richtschnur verloren, so dass statt der griechischen und punischen Treue wohl mit mehrerem Rechte die christliche Glaubwürdigkeit genannt werden möchte.

[2] *Lebor na Huidre*, p. 50 *b*, 15 *seq.*

[3] See Reeves, *Adamnan's Life of Columba*, p. 283: "About half a mile from the old church is a nearly disused burying-ground, called Rellig-na-man, or "the Women's Cemetery," and the local tradition is, that Columkill directed a woman of bad character to be buried at a spot where the sound of a bell, rung in front of the funeral, would cease to be heard at his church, and that he left an injunction that the cemetery should never be entered by a living woman or a dead man. Devout women in old times used to request burial here, under the idea that none interred here would be damned; but this impression has nearly disappeared. Outside the old parish cemetery of Termon there are two others, called Relig-na-paisde, "Children's Cemetery," and Relig-na-fear-gonta, "Cemetery of the Slain."

Thus in Irish *relic*, the Latin word is used in the same way, as, for instance, Ammian uses it in the fourth century : namely, for a lifeless body (*cadaver exanime*), since *relic* is the place where dead bodies are buried. But even the Latin word itself was used in Ireland in the old sense before Roman views were adopted. Thus Adamnan applies it in the only passage where he uses the word in the Life of St. Columba. For a certain event in the saint's life he quotes the authority of a disciple of Columba, called Ferreolus (Ernene), who told the story to him in his youth, and he adds the remark "That the bones of Ferreolus rest in the churchyard of Drumhome (Druim Thuama), in Donegal, with those of other Columban monks, waiting with the saints for the day of resurrection."[1]

The Old Irish word for "relics" is *martre*, *i.e.* "martyrs," so that Irish *Martorthech* (gen. *Martorthige*), "the House of Martyrs," and Latin *Domus Martirum*, as well as *Kilnamartry*, "Church of Martyrs," have been used as place-names[2] in the eighth century in the sense of "House of Relics, Church of Relics.[3] This old term for "relics" was firmly rooted in Ireland. Still late in the eighth century, when under Roman influence the graves of pious men were opened to enshrine their bones as relics, the Irish

[1] *Adamnan's Life of Columba*, lib. 3, 23: Ferreolus, qui inter aliorum sancti Columbae monachorum *reliquias* in Dorso Tomme sepultus cum sanctis resurrectionem expectat.

[2] *Annals of Ulster*, 721, 754; Tirechan's Notes in Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 330, 31 ; 331, 7.

[3] See Reeves, *Adamnan's Life of St. Columba*, p. 452.

applied even the Latin word *martyres* in the sense of "remains of pious men," side by side with the newly imported term *reliquiae*. The last passage in the Annals illustrating this use of the word dates from the year 775: Comotatio *martirum* sancti Erce Slane et comotatio *martirum* Uiniani Cluana Iraird: "the transfer of the bones of St. Erc and St. Uinian." Erc died in 512, and Uinian is identical with Finnian of Clonard, who died in 548, and was both Comgall's and Columba's teacher. After 784 we invariably find *reliquiarum* instead of the former *martirum* in the Annals, and consequently *relic* occurs in Middle Irish by the side of *martra* in the sense of "relics." Yet this meaning of the word *relic* did not become universal, for *relic* = relics stands by the side of *relic* = churchyard in Middle Irish, just as in modern German we find the learned term "Breve" by the side of the popular word "Brief."

**Cult of relics, a Roman custom not known in the older Celtic Church.**

What do we know about the cult of relics in the Irish Church before her submission to Rome, *i.e.* in South Ireland before 630, in the north before 697, in Northumberland up to 664, and in the rest of North Britain till 716? Ireland herself possessed no martyrs. Even in the twelfth century an Anglo-Norman, filled with the Roman spirit, thrust this reproach into the face of Archbishop Mauricius of Cashel.[1] About the year 547 Gildas knew only three martyrs from the persecution of Diocletian in Britain.[2]

[1] See Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topographia Hibernica*, iii. 32.

[2] See *Chronica Minora*, 3, 31: "Sanctum Albanum Verolamiensem, Aaron et Julium Legionum."

In the Roman Church the cult of martyrs' relics was carried on with great fervour, though in the face of violent opposition, from the second half of the fourth century, that is, in the days of Ambrosius and Jerome. Thus it is only natural that the Irish Church, in her seclusion, possessed no relics in the sense of "remains of martyrs' bodies" up to the end of the sixth century. Nor are there any records to show that in any part of the Irish Church relics were known and revered before the union with Rome. Most likely relics were a literary notion only until in the seventh century the Irish Church came into contact with the Roman. Against this conjecture only one single argument could be quoted. A notice in Bede, who is describing the departure of Colman and the Irish monks from Northumberland after the Synod at Whitby, says: "On leaving, Colman took with him part of the bones of the most reverend father Aidan; but the rest he left in the church over which he had presided, and commanded that they should be kept in a secret place."[1] But we must also remember that at Bede's time, in 731, the body of the great Columba was still quietly lying in his grave at Hi.[2] Thus it was merely a pious act on the part of Colman to take part of the bones of the Irish apostle of Northumberland, who had only died

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, 3, 26: Abiens autem domum Colman adsumsit secum partem ossium reverentissimi patris Aidani; partem vero in ecclesiâ cui praeerat reliquit et in secretario eius condi praecepit.

[2] Bede, Ibid., iii. 4: Ubi (*i.e.* Iona) et ipse (Columba) sepultus est, cum esset annorum lxxvii., post annos xxx. et duos, ex quo ipse Britanniam praedicaturus adiit.

thirteen years before (in 651), with him to Ireland, so that they should rest in Irish soil. This view finds support in the weighty circumstance that in St. Columba's Life, written by Adamnan before he joined the Roman party in 688, nothing is said of relics, of the cult of relics, or of miracles effected by relics. After joining the Roman party, Adamnan wrote a "second preface" to his Life of St. Columba, in which, of course, passing mention is made of Patricius, who is never named in the Life. This silence of Adamnan in regard to relics is all the more important, because the pervading spirit in the Life of St. Columba is faith in miracles. South Ireland had been open to Roman influence after 630, when, as already mentioned, the Roman party had sent an embassy to Rome to ask for help against the still powerful Irish party in South Ireland. In 633 this embassy returned fortified in spirit, and Cummian reveals their principal method of persuasion in his letter to Segene, where he says: "And we have proofs of the virtue of God being in the relics of the holy martyrs, and in the writings which they have brought hither. With our own eyes we have seen a totally blind girl open her eyes before these relics, we have seen a lame man walk, and many evil spirits cast out."[1] Everything in this passage, down to the very terms used (*reliquiae*), is Roman, not Irish.

Muirchu maccu Machtheni, in his Life of Patrick,

[1] M.S.L., 87, 978: Et nos in reliquiis sanctorum martyrum et scripturis quas attulerunt probavimus inesse virtutem Dei. Vidimus oculis nostris puellam caecam omnino ad has reliquias oculos aperientem et paralyticum ambulantem et multa daemonia ejecta.

bears witness to the progress made in South Ireland in the cult of relics during the course of the seventh century. Talking of his own time (before 697), he mentions with emphasis that in three different parts of the Roman-Irish territory relics are worshipped, one of them being the bones of a man who had died in peace at the beginning of the sixth century.[1]

It is most instructive in this regard to compare Adamnan's Life of St. Columba with Muirchu maccu Machtheni's Life of St. Patrick. The records are as nearly as possible contemporary, since Adamnan wrote the Life of St. Columba about 687 or 688—before joining the Roman party—and St. Patrick's Life, which had the conversion of Armagh in view, was written before 697. Adamnan was North Irish, and at the time still independent of Rome, representing the Church of North Ireland, while Muirchu maccu Machtheni was the mouthpiece of Roman views, which prevailed in South Ireland after 630. In the biography of the genuine great apostle of the Gentiles in the land of the Picts (563–597) relics are utterly unknown, while in the Life of the supposed apostle of Ireland (432–459) not only does the worship of relics prevail, but Patrick is actually made to prophesy such worship to one of the saints.[2] Such is the con-

[1] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 281, 1 : Hoc est Ercc filius Dego cuius nunc reliquiae *adorantur* in illâ civitate quae vocatur Slane. 283, 5 : quidam adoliscens poeta nomine Feac, qui postea mirabilis episcopus fuit, cuius reliquiae *adorantur* hi Sleibti. 497, 18 (De Morte Moneisen) : cuius transmarinae reliquiae ibi *adorantur* usque hodie.

[2] Ibid., ii. 497, 18 (De Morte Moneisen) : Tunc Patricius prophetavit quod post annos viginti corpus illius ad propinquam cellulam de illo loco tolleretur cum honore : quod postea ita factum est.

trast between Celtic-Irish Christianity in the Life of St. Columba and Roman-Irish Christianity in the Life of St. Patrick.

In 697 the Bishop of Armagh, and with him the rest of North Ireland, conformed to Rome in the Easter question. This was due to the united persuasive efforts of the Southern Irish and of Adamnan, who since 688 had been in favour of the Roman Easter date. In 716 Hi and the monasteries dependent on Hi followed the example of Armagh. Thus North Ireland became accessible to Roman influence, as the south had been since 633, and the same change of attitude concerning the question of relics as was noticed seventy years before in the south now took place in the north.

**Full development of the cult of relics.**

The Annals of Ulster are a valuable guide, whose dates for the eighth century tell an unmistakable tale.[1]

A.D. 727 : *The relics of Adamnan are transferred to Ireland, and his law (the Law of Innocents) is renewed.*[2]

A.D. 730 : *The return of the relics of Adamnan from Ireland in the month of October.*

Reeves[3] assumes that the bones of Adamnan were

[1] A.D. 726 : Adomnani reliquiae transferuntur in Hiberniam et lex renovatur.

[2] A.D. 729 : Reversio reliquiarum Adomnani de Hibernia in mense Octimbris.

[3] Reeves, *Adamnan's Life of Columba*, p. lxiii. : The church (of Skreen) derives its name, it is said, from Adamnan's shrine, which was preserved there. This shrine might be supposed to enclose St. Adamnan's bones, and to be the case containing the *reliquiae Adamnani*, which were brought over to Ireland in 727 for the renewal of his law, and which were taken back to Hy in 730. But according to a record in one of the Brussels MSS., which was copied by Michael O'Clery in 1629, "from an old black

already, in 727, taken from the grave as relics, although he died only in 704; because after his praiseworthy submission to the efforts of Rome, he had done so much to win over North Ireland between 688 and 704. But we cannot ascertain whether this was done—while at the same time the bones of the great Columba were still allowed to rest undisturbed in their grave—or whether, according to a less likely version, the relics of Adamnan meant a shrine with relics collected by Adamnan between 688 and 704, after conforming to Roman views. For our point of view it is of secondary importance.

A.D. 734: *The transfer of the relics of Peter, Paul, and Patrick to enforce the law or cess.*[1]

In the Book of the Angel (*Liber Angeli*), in which inferences from the Patrick legend are drawn in its own interest by the See of Armagh, we find the following notice: "Nevertheless due honour and reverence must be shown to the relics of the chief martyrs Peter and Paul, Stephen, Laurentius, and the rest."[2] In comparing the above note in the Annals

and difficult manuscript of parchment," the contents of the shrine were the various relics which Adamnan himself had collected.

Then follows a description of the shrine, with the following comment by Reeves: "It is very likely that there were two shrines called Adamnan's, the older containing his own remains, which is the one referred to in the Annals; the other containing the miscellaneous objects mentioned in the catalogue, which was in after-times coupled with his name, and preserved in his church of Skreen."

[1] Annals of Ulster, A.D. 733: Commotatio martirum Petir et Phoil et Phatraic ad legem perficiendam.

[2] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, ii. 354, 19 *seq*: Nihilominus venerari debet honore summorum martyrum reliquias Petri et Pauli, Stefani, Laurentii et caeterorum.

of Ulster with this injunction, we come to the conclusion that "to enforce law" refers to the injunction in the Book of the Angel. If the law was enforced in 734, the date of the publication of the Book of the Angel is fairly fixed. It must have been a kind of official commemorative document issued by Armagh on the occasion of the tercentenary of St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland (in 432), and must thus have been written about 732.

While in the seventh century Tirechan could still compare Patrick with Moses on the ground that the grave of neither was known,[1] a later generation believed in the legend already mentioned, that "Columba, moved by the Holy Ghost, pointed out the grave of Patrick and its locality, namely Sabul."[2] Since Adamnan (in Columba's Life) knows nothing of this legend, it must have arisen between 688 and 734. From the same time, between Muirchu maccu Machtheni's Life and Tirechan's Notes, dates a note inserted in the Book of Armagh concerning the acquisition of part of the relics of Peter, Paul, Laurentius, and Stephen for Armagh, while Patrick was in Rome.[3] Thus in 734, probably in commemoration of the first

[1] Book of Armagh, fo. 15, b. 2 : In quatuor rebus similis fuit Moysi Patricius : iiii. ubi sunt ossa eius nemo novit.

[2] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, 332, 12 : Colombcille Spiritu Sancto instigante ostendit sepulturam Patricii et ubi est confirmat, id est in Sabul.

[3] Ibid., ii. 301 : Et (Feradachus) exivit cum Patricio ad legendum triginta annis, et ordinavit illum in urbe Româ, et dedit illi nomen novum Sachellum et scripsit illi librum psalmorum quem vidi, et portavit ab illo partem de reliquiis Petri et Pauli, Laurentii et Stefani quae sunt in Machi.

Easter celebrated by Patrick in pagan Ireland in 733 according to the Dionysian cycle (?), the solemn transfer of Patrick's newly found bones took place, together with portions of the relics of Peter and Paul which Patrick was believed to have obtained in Rome.

A.D. 743 : *The transfer of the relics of Trian of Kil-Dalkey.*[1]

A.D. 776 : *The transfer of the relics of St. Erc of Slane, and the transfer of the relics of Uinian of Clon Erard.*[2]

A.D. 784 : *The arrival of the relics of the son of Erc at the monastery of Teltown.*[3]

A.D. 785 : *The transfer of the relics of Ultan (died in 656).*[4]

A.D. 790 : *The transfer of the relics of Coimgen and Mochua maccu Lugedon.*[5]

A.D. 793 : *The transfer of the relics of Tole.*[6]

A.D. 794 : *The transfer of the relics of Trian.*[7]

A.D. 800 : *The enshrining of the relics of Conlaed in a gold and silver shrine.*[8]

A.D. 801 : *The enshrining of the relics of Ronan, son of Berech, in a gold and silver shrine.*[9]

The great importance of these eighth-century notes

[1] Annals of Ulster, 742 : Commotatio *martirum* Treno Cille Deillge.

[2] A.D. 775: Comotatio *martirum* sancti Erce Slane et comotatio *martirum* Uiniani Cluana Iraird.

[3] A.D. 783 : Adventus *reliquiarum* filii Eirc ad civitatem Tailten.

[4] A.D. 784 : Commotatio *reliquiarum* Ultani.

[5] A.D. 789 : Comotatio *reliquiarum* Coimgin et Mochua maccu Lugedon.

[6] A.D. 792 : Comotatio *reliquiarum* Toli.

[7] A.D. 793 : Commotatio *reliquiarum* Treno.

[8] A.D. 799 : Positio *reliquiarum* Conlaid hi scrín óir et argait.

[9] A.D. 800 : Positio *reliquiarum* Ronaen filii Berich in arcâ auri et argenti.

in the Annals of Ulster will be fully realised by comparing them with the sixth and seventh century notes of the same Annals, which, though furnishing a mass of information on the history of the Church, *do not contain a single entry respecting relics.* But no sooner was North Ireland won over to Roman influence through the yielding of Armagh (in 697) and Hi (in 716) concerning the Easter question, than the series quoted above opens with the year 726, while at the same time Armagh exhibits at the large fairs of Ireland the relics of Patrick[1] supposed to have been found at Dun Lethglaisse (Downpatrick) in 733, and takes them to Connaught[2] and Munster.[3]

**Chief characteristic of the Celtic spirit of Christianity.**

It is an indisputable fact that in *dogma* the Celto-Irish Church—nay, the whole Celtic Church—at the end of the sixth century shows no difference from the Western Catholic Church of the fourth century, and differs but slightly from the Roman Catholic Church of the seventh century. But, at the same time, it is also undeniable that the *spirit* of the representatives of the Celtic Church at the close of the sixth century was essentially different from that displayed by the

[1] Annals of Ulster: 788. Dishonouring of the *Bachall-Isu* (St. Patrick's crosier) and the relics of Patrick by Donnchad, son of Domnall, at Rathairthir, at a fair. 830. Disturbance of the fair of Tailtiu (Teltown) at the Forads about the shrine of MacCuilind and the reliquaries of Patrick, and a great many persons died thereof.

[2] Ibid., 817. Artri, superior of Ard-Macha (*i.e.* Abbot of Armagh), went to Connaught with the shrine of Patrick.

[3] Ibid., 844. Forindan, Abbot of Ard-Macha, was taken prisoner by Gentiles in Cluain-comarda, with his reliquaries and his "family," and carried off by the ships of Luimnech (*i.e.* the lower Shannon). 845. Forindan, Abbot of Ard-Macha, came from the lands of Munster with the reliquaries of Patrick.

representatives of Rome sent to the British Isles. Both adhere to the same dogma, but on the one side we find a striving for individual freedom and personal Christianity, on the other a bigoted zeal for rigid uniformity and systematising. The Celt emphasises a Christianity pervading life and deeds, while with the Roman Catholic the observance of a formal Christianity is the chief and foremost aim, as Aldhelm so frankly proclaims.[1]

In spite of all the weak points of the Celtic Church, the life of her representatives at the beginning of the seventh century comes nearer the picture that we draw for ourselves of the apostolic era than the Christianity displayed by their rivals, the representatives of the Roman Church. And since it is not possible to give a full picture of Celtic Christianity before it came into contact with Roman ways, we will at least reproduce the portrait of one of its representatives such as it was drawn by one familiar with the conditions of the time. Bede, in speaking of Aidan, the founder of the Columban Church in Northumberland, vividly sets forth the man's characteristics; but in order evidently to meet the narrow-minded Roman views held in the Northumbrian Church at his time—which could not forgive the Irish for their adherence to the institutions of the Celtic Church, and their firmness towards Roman fanatics[2]—he deems it advisable to explain in a few prefatory words that he would neither praise nor censure Aidan, but merely wished to give the facts as

**Aidan's Character.**

[1] *Mon. Germ.*, Ep. tom. 3, 231.
[2] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 25.

a faithful historian should.[1] This he proceeds to do as follows in his description of Aidan, than which no fitter conclusion could be found to a sketch of the Celtic Church: "His love of peace and charity; his continence and humility; his mind superior to anger and avarice, and despising pride and vainglory; his industry alike in keeping and teaching the heavenly commandments; his diligence in reading and vigils; his authority so becoming to a priest in reproving the haughty and powerful, and at the same time his tenderness in comforting the afflicted and in relieving or defending the poor. To say briefly all that we learned from those who knew him, he took care to omit none of those things which he found in the apostolic or prophetical writings, but to the utmost of his power endeavoured to perform them all."[2]

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 17: "Verax historicus."

[2] Ibid., iii. 17: Studium pacis et caritatis, continentiae et humilitatis; animum irae et avaritiae victorem, superbiae simul et vanae gloriae contemtorem; industriam faciendi simul et docendi mandata caelestia, solertiam lectionis et vigiliarum, auctoritatem sacerdote dignam, redarguendi superbos ac potentes, pariter et infirmos consolandi ac pauperes recreandi vel defendendi clementiam. Qui, ut breviter multa comprehendam, quantum ab eis qui illum novere didicimus, nil ex omnibus quae in evangelicis vel apostolicis sive propheticis litteris facienda cognoverat, praetermittere, sed cuncta pro suis viribus operibus explere curabat.

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